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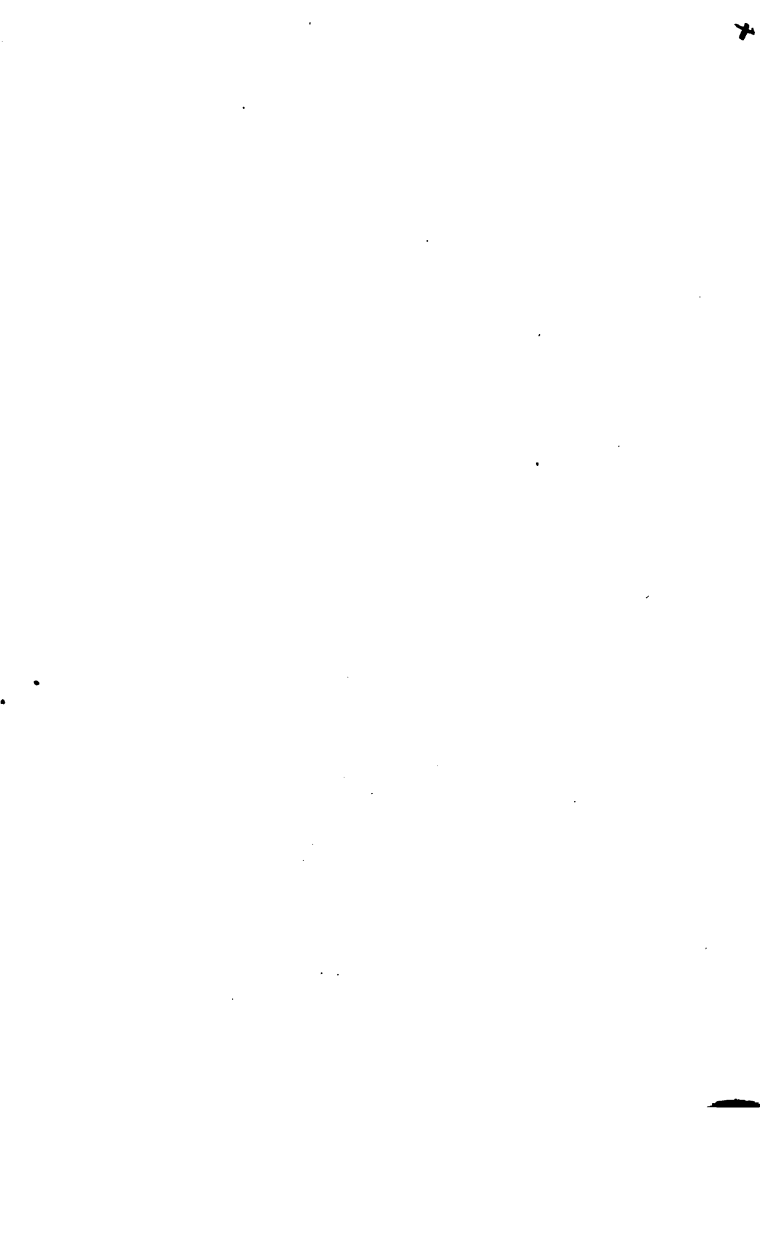
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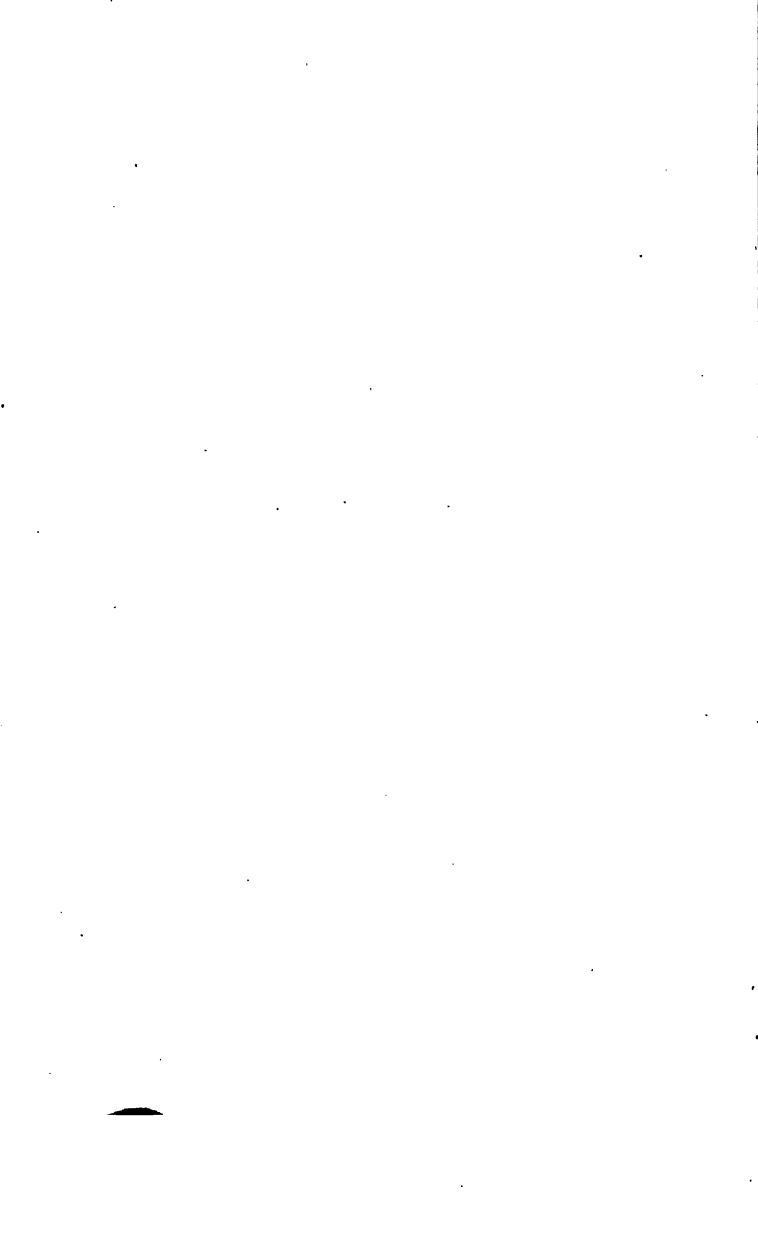
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ARTES SCIENTIA VERITAS





COMIC TALES
AND SKETCHES.

BY
Richard
ALBERT SMITH,
^

AUTHOR OF "THE ADVENTURES OF MR. LEDBURY," ETC.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1852.

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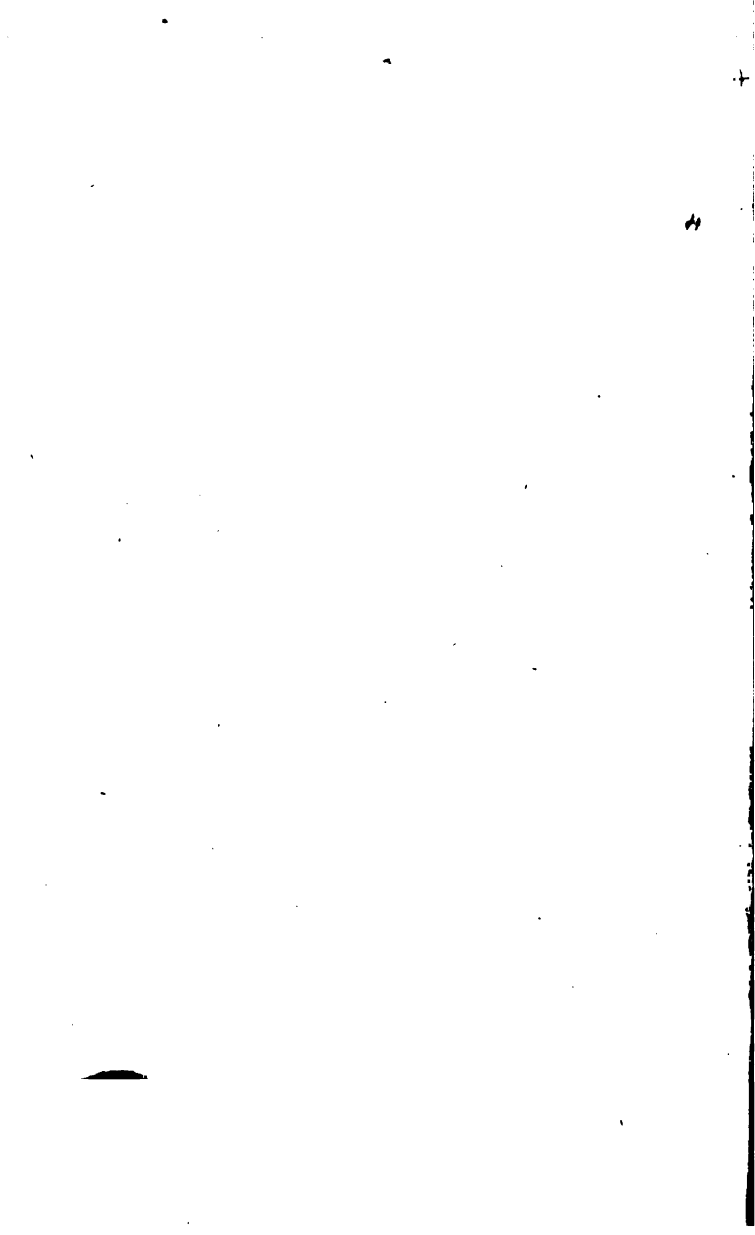
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COMIC TALES AND SKETCHES.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE LAST DERBY DAY.

(REPORTED WITHOUT HAVING BEEN TO THE RACE.)

WE are by no means a sporting character. We never kept a racer ; we do not care a straw which horse wins or loses ; and have about as much idea of what is meant by the fluctuation of the odds in the sporting divisions of the newspapers as we have of playing upon the ophicleide,—an instrument we never could bring ourselves to learn, for fear of some day tumbling into it and never being heard of again. Neither did we ever make a bet on the course higher than half a dozen pairs of gloves with some dark-eyed Peri in lined muslin and *guirlandes Joséphine*, or a foolish half-crown at a roulette-table—a very precarious chance in either case. We know as much of Tattersall's as Geoffrey Chaucer did of Musard's quadrilles : and yet we always look forward to the Derby as one of the greatest treats in the whole twelve months.

With these sentiments, it may be conceived that we were not over-pleased at being compelled to stay in town

on the last Derby day,—the more so, as we had already received several invitations; and similar despatches to the following were continually dropping in :—

No. I.

[Hurried writing, and no wafer: brought by a little boy in buttons.]

“DEAR AL.

“Will you have a go-in at a drag to Epsom? It won't come to much—about 2*l.* 10*s.* each, including feed. We shall take something better than cape and gooseberry. Let's know soon; and learn 'The Monks of Old' and 'The Irish Quadrilles' on your cornet.

“Yours always,

“HARRY —.”

“Lincoln's Inn.”

This was refused, for obvious reasons hereafter stated. Besides, we know how these parties always end, where the charm of female society is wanted to check the exuberance of youthful spirits. We joined one some time back, of which our last reminiscence is that of endeavouring to cut up a cold fowl with the cork-screw, and drinking champagne out of a mustard-pot. We have a faint idea of leaving the course with a thousand other vehicles, all jostling along in one whirling cloud of dust and confusion, and disputing about a turnpike ticket—somewhere,—and offering to decide the quarrel by the ancient ordeal of trial by battle with the tollman; but this scene is as indistinct and evanescent as an unfixed daguerreotype.

No. II.

[Lace-work envelope, scented paper, medallion wafer, stamped with an unintelligible coat-of-arms, and small,

formal, angular handwriting—a good specimen of “a style after six lessons.”]

“Mrs. ——— is very ~~happy~~ in being able to offer Mr. S—— a seat in her ~~landau~~ to Epsom. Should he feel inclined to join her party, an early answer will oblige.”

This was received, and ~~also~~ refused, on Tuesday morning. We were evidently pitched upon to fill up a sudden hiatus at the eleventh hour: besides, three very plain daughters, all single, and carrying flaring parasols all different,—servants in gaudy liveries, who would have made capital harlequins if put into a kaleidoscope,—nothing for lunch but warm sandwiches and flabby cucumber, peppered with dust,—together with an air of intense *parvenu* dash flung over the whole set-out,—all these combined were too much even for the sake of a cast to the Derby.

No. III.

[A dirty piece of paper, folded in that peculiar ingenious and intricate manner which only the inferior orders can contrive; closed with a common red wafer, ornamented with five distinct impressions of the end of a watch-key.]

“Hond sir i Take the librtty to Inform you of A wan as will start from My shop on Wensday for The Darby to epsm for a Sovrin there And back and shall be onnord by your campny from your obedient and Humbil servent

“JOHN HIGGS.”

This was from our friend the greengrocer in the next street, and was gratefully declined, as was also the request from a neighbouring shopkeeper that we would inspect the celebrated six-and-sixpenny Derby blouse. But these



were not all the inducements to go. A kind friend, who resides close to the Downs, actually offered us a bed before and after the race. Placards of "superior four-horse coaches to Epsom" stared at us from every office in London; all the railways, annihilating every idea of space, endeavoured, we know not how, to prove that some of their stations were near the course,—we are not certain whether we were not told that the Eastern Counties was the best line to take; and all the world seemed wrapped up in the idea that the Queen would grace the course,—which not proving true, was a remarkable instance of the

Derby and *hoax* taking place on the same day. We believe the joke to be original; if not, we humbly crave pardon for having introduced it.

To be candid, the plain truth of the matter was, we could not afford the trip. The season had been, up to the period in question, comparatively very expensive, and much more gaiety was yet to follow, which would make a great diminution in our exchequer, although we inhabit chambers on the fifth floor in a cheap inn (of court), and contrive occasionally, by dint of extreme caution, to make the same pair of white trousers appear two consecutive days in Regent Street. But our darling boots—the especial favourites with the bronze morocco tops and patent feet—had begun to evince the first symptoms of decline in the soles, brought on by over-waltzing. Moreover, the invincible stock, with the tiny bouquets embroidered thereon, seemed to have fallen out with our chin, unfortunately “like a stubble land at harvest-home,” and was also on the decay; and a new black waistcoat of plain satin had been shot by some champagne, and tastefully ornamented with red spots, more palpable than pleasing, which rendered another absolutely necessary. We argued with ourselves a long time, which controversy is always an obstinate one; and at last, reflecting that the money which we should kick down at the Derby would go a great way towards replacing these things, if it did not actually cover the expense, we decided *not to go*.

The instant we had come to this determination we assumed a calm resignation, which was almost supernatural, when the sacrifice which we had made is considered. This lasted until the evening before the day, and then our first discomforts began. We gradually became restless and uneasy, ~~feeling~~ as satisfied as a per-

son who, upon principle alone, has given up attending a pleasant evening party "to go to bed early," and consequently lies awake until four in the morning, picturing to himself all the time what is going on at the *réunion* in question, and listening to chimerical cornets-à-piston playing imaginary quadrilles, until every article on his wash-hand-stand appears having a dance to itself in derision.

We went to the theatre to help out the evening; and when it was over, not feeling tired, we entered one of the night-taverns to supper. It was Evans', and the room was crowded with sporting men,—the two names "Coldrenick" and "Attila" perpetually ringing in our ears. This reminded us too keenly of our position, so we rushed away to the Cyder Cellars: here the same subject formed the only topic of conversation. It was the same at the Albion and the Coal-Hole,—for in our nervous irritability we took supper at all,—we do not think we ever bolted so many poached eggs in our life; and finally, when we dropped into the Wrekin, where the usual talk is unmixedly theatrical, we found the same two names still echoing in every corner of the room. We now gave up all ideas of distraction, and went moodily home to bed.

We are not an early riser; but on the Wednesday morning a villanous clock that hangs in our room, whose alarum has obstinately refused to ring for many months, went off by itself at five in the morning, and roused us from a troubled slumber. In our anger we seized a boot that was within reach, and with a good aim entirely stopped its proceedings:—it will never ring more. Going to sleep again was out of the question. The morning was most lovely, and the bustle all over the house, even at that early hour, proved that the happy men who were going to Epsom had already commenced their prepara-

tions. Anon came an unwonted clatter of vehicles in the thoroughfare below; every instant a fresh pair of legs bounded up alternate stairs; and once in every ten minutes a knock was given at our door by one or other of the floors, to borrow a corkscrew, a clothes-brush, a wicker-covered tumbler, a pepper-castor, or something of the kind. These annoyances were brought to a climax at seven o'clock by the intrusion of a wretched boy, who insisted upon leaving a raised *pâté*, which, he said, we had ordered and paid for the day before, at some pie-builder's in the Strand. We sent a boot-jack after him down stairs in extreme wrath; forgetting at the moment that our own name being by no means exclusive or uncommon, there was a man on the ground-floor who revelled in the same felicitous cognomination.

That universal eccaleobion, the sun, had been hatching the countless events of the day into action for some hours—in plain terms, it was about ten o'clock—when we finished breakfast. By that time our neighbours had all departed, and a sense of overwhelming wretchedness stole over us. Robinson Crusoe on his uninhabited island, and the Ancient Mariner who shot the albatross, in his lonely boat,—Jacques Balmat, when he got to the top of Mont Blanc,—and Sinbad the Sailor, when he got to the bottom of the Diamond Valley,—Mr. Green, the aéronaut, up in a balloon at an altitude of twelve thousand feet,—and Mr. Deane, the diver, amidst the sea-bound relics of the Royal George,—Elizabeth Woodcock, when she was frozen in the snow,—the only Sunday occupant of a Bow-street cell, having failed to obtain bail,—a Gresham lecturer,—the last man of the season,—may all have their peculiar ideas of solitude, but they were cheerful to our

own loneliness. We were the left-behind of a pilgrim caravan,—the locomotive oasis of a vast desert!

After walking up and down our room for about half an hour, in the manner of a caged panther at the Surrey Zoological Gardens during the fireworks from St. Angelo, we determined to sally forth into the streets; and, mechanically following the sun, we bent our steps towards the West. Several carriages on their way to Epsom passed us; we imagined their inmates looked upon us with pitying eyes, and perceived that we were completely within the rules of our own ill-temper. We felt almost ashamed of being seen, and we sought the retirement of by-courts and passages.

At the Regent Circus all was life and gaiety. The thoroughfare was literally blocked up with carriages about to start, on nearly all of which we recognized an acquaintance, who bawled out in a satirical and insulting manner, "I suppose we shall see you on the Downs." One even pushed his cruelty so far as to inform us that we should find lobster-salad after the race at their drag on the hill. They went off, and others arrived; we scarcely thought there were so many vehicles and horses in London as, until half-past twelve, collected between the County Fire-Office and Carlton Chambers. At length the very last turn-out rolled away down Regent Street; it seemed to be the tie that bound us to the world. "The last links were broken;" and when we had followed it with our eyes until it diminished in the distance, and turned round the corner of Pall Mall, we could have cried for very despondency.

The Quadrant was deserted as we strolled up it. Here and there two or three persons in thick boots, and badly-

cut strapless trowsers, carrying dropsical umbrellas, were staring in at the shops ; but these, and others of the same uninteresting class, constituted the sole occupants of the colonnade. We turned sulkily into one of the billiard-rooms for distraction. There was no clicking of balls as we ascended the stairs ; the public *salle* was unoccupied ; the marker amusing himself, as markers always do, with countless endeavours to perpetrate impossible cannons. Our apparition did not interfere with his pastime. It was evident that he thought nothing of a man who could coolly walk into a billiard-room at the same instant that the horses were exercising in the Warren,—that we could be nobody worth caring for, or we should not be in London. He regarded us for a minute with a glance of mingled contempt and unconcern ; then whistled part of “ *Deh con te,*” out of tune, made a red hazard, drank some beer from a pewter-pot that stood on the mantelpiece, and continued his sport.

The *trottoir* of Regent Street was equally lonely. It presented nothing but a line of unrelieved hot pavement, which blinded you to look at ; over which, at certain intervals, a few individuals were endeavouring to strut their little hour in the absence of the usual dashing *fâneurs*, like the German company attempting *Norma* upon the stage, and with the same scenery and appointments that had whilome been graced by Adelaide Kemble and her vocal contemporaries.

We had heard a great deal about Catlin’s American Indians,—the Mandans, Ojibbeways, Stumickosucks, and other euphonical tribes, and we determined upon paying them a visit at the Egyptian Hall, to carry on time. But the same unpleasantly pursued us,—the exhibition had closed the day before, and there was nothing to be seen.

but a diagram of the Missouri Leviathan, and a notice that the room was to be let. As we turned away in sorrow, a Kew Bridge omnibus passed. Lucky idea! we had a pretty cousin at a young ladies' establishment at Turnham Green, and we would pay her a visit. "*C'est si gentil—d'avoir une belle cousine,*" as Paul de Kock says: and, besides, perhaps we might see some of the other girls—who could tell? We hailed the omnibus, and, after waiting at the White Horse Cellar until we had inspected all the perambulating manufactures there offered for sale, we proceeded on our journey, and were finally put down at the seminary.

After knocking twice at the door, hearing a bell ring inside, and seeing divers heads *en papillote* bob up over the front blinds, and then bob down again with most extraordinary celerity, we were allowed to enter, and were shown into a room that was the perfect picture of a school-parlour. There was a cabinet piano, (not for the pupils,) and a pair of globes: some chalk copies of French heads; a vase of dead flowers, in greenish water, on the table; and some worsted ones in a paper-basket on the cheffonier, planted in a bung wrapped round with frizzled green paper; straw spill-cases on the mantelpiece, and pasteboard card-racks at the sides, adorned with little square views of gentlemen's seats cut out of the last year's pocket-books, and stuck on with gum. These things, together with a small table, on which were displayed a stuffed bird, two blown-glass ships, a guitar pincushion, and a pen-wiper made of little round bits of coloured cloth, with a transfer card-case, completed the garniture of the room,—not to omit two grape-jars, painted green, and covered with birds cut from chintz bed-furniture. The mistress chanced to be engaged for a few minutes,—schoolmistresses always are

when you call,—during which time we inspected the curiosities of the room; listened to the jingling of the practising piano through the wall, pitied the teacher, and then began to think what a godsend Bristol-board, perforated cards, and coloured floss-silk must have been to young ladies' establishments, until the mistress herself entered. Accumulation of despair! we were informed that, pursuant to agreement, some friends had called for our cousin that very morning about ten o'clock, to take her to Epsom! We made a most ungainly *congé* to the lady, and, quitting the house, savagely stopped an omnibus on the high-road, and, violently forcing our way into the interior, travelled back to London. We then wandered—we cannot tell how, to Hungerford Market; and, having looked at all the shrimps and periwinkles until we knew them by heart, we inspected the preparations for the foot-bridge, and then made a fourpenny tour to Vauxhall in the "Lightning" steamboat, returning in the "Thunder" by way of variety.

At last we found we were in the neighbourhood of some acquaintances, who had been looking somewhat cold upon us lately, because we had not called to pay our respects so often as we might have done. Lucky idea again! we would endeavour to wipe off the stain upon our character. We knocked at the door and awaited an answer. Two maid-servants looked out from the open window of a drawing-room next door; a parrot swore at us from across the road; and a head elevated itself from the area, and gazing at us for a moment disappeared again. It was quite plain that we were an object of curiosity in the street. But the knock remained unanswered, and we attacked the lion's head again, with an accompanying tug at the bell. After another delay an untidy woman opened the door about six inches, just enough to show us that the chain was up, and

peering from the aperture inquired what we wanted. On answering the question by another, whether the mistress of the house was at home? we learnt that the whole party had "gone to Epsom," servants and all, and that she, the cook, was the only one left in the house. We insinuated a card between the door and the post, (which the woman received between her finger and thumb enveloped in her apron,) and rushed despairingly away.

The longest day, however, will come to an end; and evening at length arrived. We sauntered over to Kennington turnpike to see the crowds return; and after waiting there an hour, a carriage full of friends drew up close to where we were standing, its progress being interrupted by the ticket-nuisance at the gate. There was a vacant place in the rumble, which, upon the invitation of the owner, we took possession of, heartily glad to have some one to speak to. We had barely taken our seat when another carriage drew up close to us—it was that of the people upon whom we had called during the day. One of the handsome girls of the family inquired how we had liked the race. We were ashamed at the moment to confess that we had not been; and, not thinking that we had called at the house, we told her it was charmingly run. These good folks have since sent out invitations for an evening party, and we are not asked; we think they received our card on their return, and have imagined that we got somebody else to leave it, knowing that there was no chance of finding them at home.

Our other friends, on whose carriage we were, had all been winners, and were returning home in high spirits to a capital supper, to which they were good enough to request our company. But we steadfastly refused, and got down at Waterloo Bridge, feeling no inclination to join a

party where all the conversation would necessarily turn upon an event which we knew nothing about. A comfortable repast in our own chambers, did not put us in better humour, and we retired to bed at an early hour, after the dullest day we ever remember to have spent; inwardly resolving never again to miss seeing the Derby run, even if we were compelled by circumstances to travel thither on the top of a ginger-beer cart.

PUNCH.

AMIDST the various inducements to loiter on your way which the streets of London continually present, there is one object that always possesses for us an irresistible attraction, far above all others; and that is the peripatetic theatre of our adored friend Punch. No matter how pressing our business—no matter how late for our appointment we may be, or distant from the spot to which we are progressing, the instant we hear Punch's shrill expressive squeak, and behold the light framework of the scene of his gambols assuming a fixed perpendicular position, we bid a temporary adieu to aught else of consequence. And taking our place amongst the crowd of small boys, servant-maids, printers' devils, errand-carriers, and other street-frequenters that surround his temple, we are for the time lost to everything but the tricks and drolleries, the sly manœuvres and deep-laid schemes, of our merry, bold, cowardly, deceitful, candid puppet.

We are never ashamed of being caught gazing at Punch. Many of our friends—nice young gentlemen of the glazed boot and lemon kid-glove school—have severely reprobated us for yielding to the inducements which the wooden hero

holds out to arrest our steps; but these chidings have invariably gone in at one ear and out at the other—a curious overland journey across the brain, which no philosopher has yet properly defined, although we hear of it hourly in society. We are not angry with our friends, for everybody has his own ideas of refinement and gentility; but we pity them. We regret that they allow themselves to be deprived of much amusement and real laughter, from a mistaken notion of the *comme-il-faut*. And if they are seen, what does it matter? There are puppets in society, whose tricks are similar to, and twice as mischievous as, the pranks of Punch, whom it is thought no disgrace to gaze at. But this is one of the results of our English “fear-of-what-other-people-think.” In the Champs Elysées, the small rough benches which the poor exhibitor of Punch places in front of his show are thronged with grown-up and respectable people, who scream with uncontrolled delight at his vagaries. The French enjoy themselves, because they do not quail, as we do, beneath the opinions of their neighbours; and the same feeling which allows them to ride in roundabouts and revolving ships, permits them equally to enter, heart and soul, into the performances of Punch, without caring whether anybody they know is regarding them or otherwise.

We cannot, however, disguise the melancholy fact, that Punch is on the decline. It is true that he escaped the notice of the Metropolitan Police Act, and, whilst the dogs were emancipated from the trucks, he was permitted to bully and tease the hapless Toby to his heart's content; still, we fear his glories are departing. Commend us to the goodly times when Mr. Powell, the prince of “motion-makers,” set forth his exhibition “under the little Piazza in Covent Garden,” and the Opera at the Haymarket was



seriously injured by the *concurrence*; when the sparrows and chaffinches at the latter theatre, instead of perching on the trees, only put out the candles, and the ballet yielded in attraction to the pig that danced a minuet with Punch. The clever paper of Steele, that made Pope shake his sides as he read it, related to no commonplace performance. But, alas! the times are sadly changed. The Opera has resumed its sway, and a *pas de deux*

between Perrot and Cerito is now thought superior to the celebrated opening dance between Punch and his consort.

Punch loves to be in the world, although he affects retirement from a great thoroughfare. He rather inclines to a quiet street that debouches into the stream of population. Hence the *cul-de-sacs* in the Strand that lead towards the river are sometimes favoured by him ; for he is not annoyed there by passing vehicles, whilst he can attract a good audience from the foot-passengers. We have occasionally seen him at the bottom of Berners Street ; more frequently in the offshoots of Tottenham Court Road ; and very often in Castle Street, Leicester Square, his most favoured locality, where he collects a delighted crowd from the multitudes who are perpetually threading that extraordinary series of courts and archways, combs, straw-bonnets, cold ham, false teeth, and portmanteaus, that leads from New Street towards the West-end. Here he revels in uncontrolled wickedness ; here his scream is more joyously shrill than in any other situation ; and here his performance is generally of a more prolonged nature, from the change of audience, than his spectators are usually favoured with. And yet we never saw the end of it—we do not believe any one ever did, for his antics are too often cut short by the paucity of the last collection of coppers which has been solicited in the inverted cymbal.

Our ideas of Punch are of a mysterious and inexplicable kind. We cannot quite divest ourselves of the opinion, that he is not altogether an inorganic body—a mere compound of wood, calico, and dirty paint. We confess it without shame, we should not sleep tranquilly in our bed if Punch were lying on the toilet-table. We should feel more at our ease if we locked him up in a drawer pre-

vious to retiring to rest, because then we should know there was not such a chance of his amusing himself during the night by beating the back of our head with his all-powerful cudgel. Even in his own abode, although we are distinctly aware that there is a man in a fustian jacket and corduroy trousers, with lace-up boots, directing his actions, we still concentrate all our ideas of vitality there enclosed in our frolicsome hero. The other persons of the drama are mere puppets, subservient to the proper performance of the comedy; but Punch is an exception to them. We can imagine him, when the show is over, carrying his pugnacious disposition into the oblong box that encloses him and his companions, and thrashing them with the same merciless vigour when shut up in the afore-said case, as he did when he figured in public.

Whenever we see a Punch's show, we look upon the chief actor as the same being we have witnessed before, and invest him with the same propensities and internal economy. We cannot reconcile ourselves to the reality, that there are more Punches than one in the world; and nothing would distress our intellectual faculties more than to see two Punches in one show. A sight like this would bewilder us; our mind would not be able to grapple with the confusion thus created. We would rather not witness so strange a sight, but incline to the theory that Punch is ubiquitous; that the same Punch who figures at the Fête of St. Cloud is the next moment, perhaps even at that very time, thrashing the constable to the delight of a London mob, or amusing the pleasure-seekers on the smooth turf of Egham race-course.

Punch is the only one of the street performers who does not care a bit for the policemen. We were watching his drama one day, in company with a friend, to whose



able pencil we are indebted for the illustration, when a raw recruit of the Police force requested the wooden hero to "move on." But Punch, nothing daunted, immediately began to argue the case with his enemy, in which he succeeded so admirably, that the policeman was glad to slink off amidst the laughter and jeers of the audience. He could not have been more completely beaten had he been Jack Ketch, Shallabala, the constable; or any other of the puppets.

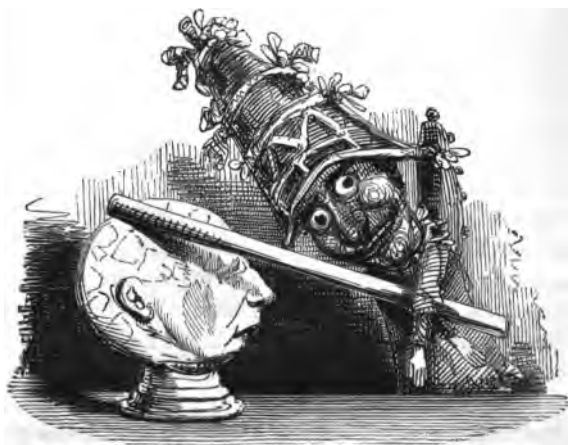
Punch enjoys an excellent constitution. Blows that would be sudden death to other people, fall lightly and unheeded upon his occiput. He merely exclaims, "How hard the wind blows!" and cures himself in five seconds

by rubbing the back of his head against the wings of his theatre—a species of counter-irritation to which many quacks have, doubtless, been indebted for their ideas. One of his finest delineations, however, is the manner in which, after receiving a thrashing from the unknown intruder, he looks carefully round his theatre, to see from what quarter the injuries have proceeded, and concludes his search by leaning half over the front, and endeavouring to peer round the sides of the show. This is perfect, and only approached by his occasional convulsive shudders after the ghost has appeared to him, one of the most terrible personifications of supernatural fright ever exhibited. Nor does the Belgian Lion at Waterloo repose in calmer triumph over the mound of slaughtered heroes which it surmounts, than Punch does, when he tranquilly perches himself upon the line of victims to his conquering arm, whose lifeless forms embellish the front board of his theatre.

The drama of Punch has suffered material change within the last few years. The baby, Jack Ketch, the gallows, and the — (we hesitate to write his name) the — enemy of mankind, have almost disappeared. Their places have been supplied by a clown, and divers other characters. We have also witnessed a tin caddy, through which Jim Crow pokes his head, when Punch's curiosity leads him to peep into the interior; and a spectre made of wood, with an enormous mouth of red cloth. We do not like these innovations. They look like a taste for spectacle, and, where this prevails, the legitimate drama must fall. Punch is to the Fantoccini what Shakespeare is to the ballets of Her Majesty's Theatre, and we should not wish either to merge into the other. Some mercenary proprietors have desecrated Punch's show by turning it to account with an

evening exhibition of Chinese shadows, illuminated by various candle-ends placed behind. This is unpardonable ; and we were exceedingly rejoiced to see the transparent screen destroyed by accidental conflagration a few evenings since, in Bloomsbury Square. It was a just visitation.

In conclusion, we have a question to ask, connected with our immortal friend ; and, if any of our readers can solve it, we shall be more than happy to receive their communications. How is Punch's unearthly voice produced ? Is it a natural sound, or the result of some peculiar instrument in the mouth ? We were taught in infancy, that two quadrangular pieces of tin, bound together by narrow tape, would produce the desired effect, when placed between the lips. This is not the fact. A squeaking sound may be perpetrated through their use, but no articulation of words is practicable ; and we opine that the noise is the result of much training, or natural conformation of the muscles of



Punch on the head.

the organs of voice. One use these tin instruments certainly possess. A lady of our acquaintance bitterly offended us. We could not openly retaliate, so we cloaked our anger under the mask of kindness. We made four of the above whistles, and gave them to the same number of her children. Our vengeance was complete; the house was the scene of one long, continuous squeak, from morning till night, as shrill as Punch's, without the advantage of his sage remarks.

THE WAR WITH CHINA.

(OUR OWN NOTIONS OF IT.)

WE are not about to enter into a political controversy. We leave that exciting task to the wrangling editors of newspapers, the writers of stitched pamphlets without covers, and the race of quarrelsome gentlemen who squabble after dinner during that very bearish time which custom has appropriated to such verbal engagements, when Tours' plums, dogs and horses, Lord Melbourne, *Mirabelles de*



Metz, the Duke of Wellington, sponge-cake, cut-glass and claret, are presumed to be proper and equivalent substitutes

for the presence of the fairer portion of the creation. We are not going to bring forward any statistics of tea, rhubarb, and opium ; neither can we give the reader any information upon the state of the workhouses, or names of the boards of guardians in various parishes pertaining to the Canton, Macao, or Chusan unions : but we do not see why we should not say *our* few words upon the Chinese Question, which seems so troublesome to answer, the more so as we are an ardent admirer of the refreshing beverage ; in addition, adore little feet and ivory carvings, and especially lean to the old blue-pattern plates and dishes.

Talking of that same old blue pattern, we believe it is but lately that anything has been discovered authentically connected with its origin. It appears, from the information of an ancient document, found in the great library of Long Man, an eminent Chinese bibliopolist, that the original design appeared in an early edition of the Pekin Picturesque Porcelain Annual, where it was inserted by the great artist Fin Den, who dedicated the plate to the Mandarin Twing, whose palace without the city walls it was intended to describe ; and who, it was moreover hoped, would pay all expenses incidental to the bringing out of the plate, in consideration of the honour pertaining to the dedication. The Mandarin, however, did not take the hint ; and, when the Annual went into ~~other~~ hands, the original design was purchased by a great ~~crockery~~ founder, who reproduced the view in a plate of different construction. Twing, incensed that any one who did ~~not wear~~ red shoes, or whose nails were not ~~more than an inch~~ in length, should even look upon a representation of his summer retreat, obtained an injunction to restrain the production of any more pieces. The remaining few were rapidly bought up, and kept in secret cabinets ; until Twing died,

from standing upon his head one day upwards of two hours in the broiling sun, the tenure by which he held the high employment of ~~cutting~~ the Emperor's corns, and the plates and dishes, being again published, derived additional interest from the circumstance, and by degrees were exported all over the world. We should like to know the house which does not possess one.

When we first heard there was a prospect of a war with China, we regarded it as a rumour of extreme eccentricity—a piece of exquisite fun, replete with droll actions and engagements. The impressions of the man are composed of the same elements as the ideas of childhood, although circumstance exerts a slight alteration in their affinity; and we could not entirely divest ourselves of the thoughts we were accustomed to link with “China and the Chinese,” when the Arabian Nights’ Entertainments, every word of whose gorgeous illusions we received as gospel, ranked far above the productions of Shakspeare, Byron, or Scott, in our immature conception. Nor was the picture we formed of China conjured up by our own minds alone. We had the opportunity of referring to a valuable series of tea-canisters on the shelves of a neighbouring grocer, who opened his shop as the “China Tea Company,” hung balloons in his windows, jappanned his drawers, sold tea-chests for rabbit-hutches, and had a strange squat figure seated in the centre of the four-shilling Bohea compartment, that wagged its head and tongue all day long at the gazers whom its antics attracted to flatten their noses against his panes of glass. From the aforesaid canisters we were enabled to glean much valuable pictorial information respecting the domestic manners of the Chinese. Probably we might have studied the subject more deeply, but fate willed otherwise. The concern failed, the shop was closed;



and the "Company" ran off in the middle of the night, no one knew whither, and we believe no one cared, except those who had demands upon the establishment. We only wondered what effect the defalcation had upon the funds of the Celestial Empire.

We were a long time bringing ourselves to think that the Chinese were a nation of men and women; in fact, human beings, who thought, moved, and acted in a manner similar to ourselves. We much more readily inclined to the opinion that they were a race of supernaturally animated ornaments, who wore inverted basins for head-dresses, and kept odd-shaped dragons and monsters, all claws and crockery, for their domestic animals. We pictured to ourselves their abodes made of porcelain, painted all sorts of

colours, and thatched with rice-paper. Their cities we conjured up as lighted by millions of isinglass lanterns, which kept perpetually turning round. Their vegetation we confined to curious strange arborescent productions, with large round vermilion balls for fruit, growing naturally in a state of the highest varnish; and we could almost see their public roads, buildings, and fortifications, all constructed of *papier mâché*, gaily japanned. If war had been declared at that period, we should not have been much astonished to have found some morning that all the China ornaments in England had walked off spontaneously to take up the cause of their country, and fight in its defence. These ideas continued in full force with us for some long period, until a series of Eastern spectacles, which it was our luck to witness at the theatres, turned the current of our minds into another channel. For the first time we then became aware that real living beings formed the population of the country belonging to the Sun's intimate connexion; but even these differed from other people. They wore odd six-angled hats, a species of painted convolvulus-shaped gossamers, with bells hung round them; they danced strange figures, with the forefingers of each hand elevated to the level of their ears; they allowed their mustachios to grow until they trailed upon the ground; and, in their stage encounters, one English sailor generally fought twelve at once, all of whom he finally put to flight, having cut off their pig'tails, or whirled them round by these appendages, like horizontal bandalores, until they were choked. And is it true, we asked ourselves, that the Government is seriously thinking of going to war with these grotesque beings? What huge fun we immediately foresaw in the encounter; what a realization of the scenes in *Aladdin* and the *Bronze Horse*, to say nothing of *The*

Illustrious Stranger and *Zazezizozu* ! And our great men-of-war were sailing out, actually and literally sailing out, to engage with their junks—those odd constructions of thin painted laths, strips of red cloth, and reed masts with tea-leaf sails, that we could almost have built from imagination ! Why, we should have thought that one small cannon-ball would have crashed through twenty of them at once, splintering and smashing them in all directions. It appeared perfectly cowardly in our nation to think for an instant of attacking in reality a set of poor scaramouches, who resided in inverted tea-cups on a large scale, lived on paper shavings and fried silkworms, built pagodas like magnified card houses, and whose most inspiring war-music was comprised in a band of copper stewpans. At length we heard that there really had been a skirmish, and that one of their great people, who rejoiced in the high-sounding and aristocratic appellation of Lin, had written a letter, or published a document, or something of the kind. We should very much like to have seen that document. We will be bound it was something exquisitely comic, written with various inks, commencing at the bottom, and filled with characters from the endless alphabet which adorns the invoices of tea-chests and cakes of Indian ink. But—ha ! ha ! ha !—you can scarcely help smiling at the bare idea, the mere fact of their even daring to expostulate ; they, of whom we should have conceived one halfpenny squib would have put to flight an army ; they, whose cannon we thought must be varnished pasteboard, and whose fortifications carved ivory ; they, whose only commerce consisted, independently of their tea, in pearl card-counters and books of gaudy birds and flowers, or ornaments like miniature trunks of trees with distorted spines, carved into human heads at the top ; these odd crea-

tures had remonstrated with England. How very ridiculous!

Why it is that the whole empire has not, long before this, been blown entirely to atoms by our guns, we are at a loss to conceive. British humanity must be the only obstacle to such a performance. But, if they are still insolent, we counsel instant and unmitigated annihilation of the whole of them; for what would all our former glories avail us, in the page of history, if we were finally jockeyed by a tribe of nodding mandarins, crockery-baking savages, painters of rice-paper, and manufacturers of chop-sticks and feather fans?

By way of a rider, we subjoin the last expresses from the Celestial Empire, by our own private electro-galvanic communication. As this rapid means of transmission carries despatches so fast that we generally get them before they are written, we are enabled to be considerably in advance of the common daily journals, more especially as we have obtained news up to next Midsummer.

The most important paper which has come to hand is the "Macao Sunday Times." It appears that the fortifications for surrounding Peking are progressing rapidly; but that the Government have determined upon building the ramparts of japanned canvass and bamboo rods, instead of pounded rice, which was thought too fragile to resist the attacks of the English barbarians. Some handsome porcelain guns have been placed upon the walls, with a proportionate number of carved ivory balls, elaborately cut one inside the other. These, it is presumed, will split upon firing, and produce incalculable mischief and confusion. Within the gates a frightful magazine of gilt crackers and other fireworks has been erected, which, in the event of

the savages penetrating the fortifications, will be exploded one after another to terrify them into fits, when they will be easily captured. This precaution has scarcely been thought necessary by some of the mandarins, as our great artist, Wang, has covered the external joss-house with frantic figures, that must strike terror to the souls of all beholders. Gold paper has also been kept burning upon altars of holy clay at every practicable point of the defences, which it is hardly thought they will have the hardihood to approach; and the sacred ducks of Fanqui have been turned loose in the river, to retard the progress of the infidel fleet.

During the storm of last week the portcullis which had been placed in the northern gate, and was composed of solid rice-paper, with cross-bars of chop-sticks, was much damaged. It is now under repair, and will be coated entirely with tea-chest lead, to render it perfectly impregnable. The whole of the household troops and body-guard of the Emperor have also received new accoutrements of tin-foil and painted isinglass. They have likewise been armed with japanned bladders, containing peas and date-stones, which produce a terrific sound upon the least motion.

An Englishman has been gallantly captured this morning, in a small boat, by one of our armed junks. He will eat his eyes in the palace court this afternoon; and then, being inclosed in soft porcelain, will be baked to form a statue for the new pagoda at Bo-lung, the first stone of which was laid by the late Emperor, to celebrate his victory over the rude northern islanders.

“Canton.

“The Emperor has issued two following chops to the Hong merchants, forbidding them to assist or correspond

with the invaders, under pain of having their finger-nails drawn out, and rings put in their eyelids. Howqua resists the order; and it is the intention of Lin, should he remain obstinate, to recommend his being pounded up with broken crockery, and packed in Chinese catty packages, to be forwarded, as an example, to the Mandarin Pidding of the wild island.

“An English flag, stolen by a deserter from Chusan, will be formally insulted to-morrow in the market-place by the Emperor and his court. Derisive grimaces will be made at it by the mandarins of the sixth class; and it will subsequently be hoisted, in scorn, to blow at the mercy of the winds upon the summit of the palace, within sight of the barbarians.

“An English soldier, despatched by the barbarians on a mission of peace, was despatched by our people on his arrival.”

DELIGHTFUL PEOPLE.

THERE are two sets of people in society—the amusers and the amused, who are both equally useful in their way, although widely different in their attributes. A *réunion*, to go off well, should contain a proper share of either class; because, notwithstanding the inability of the latter to contribute much to the festivity of the meeting, they make an excellent and patient audience, without which the powers of the amusers are cramped, and they feel they are not sufficiently appreciated.

Why all people, enjoying the same level of intellect, should not be equally sought after in society, we do not pretend to decide; but we will endeavour to account for it by falling back upon our theatrical analogies. If you study the playbills, you see, year after year, the same names amongst the companies who keep at the same humble standard; whilst others, whom you recollect as their inferiors, ultimately arrive at big letters and benefits—in fact, that chance, tact, *forte*, and opportunity, come spontaneously to the latter, whilst the former are content to remain servants and peasants. They have been known to embody guests and mobs, and have sometimes arrived at first citizens; but this is by no means a common occurrence. The same union of circumstances that divides a theatrical commonwealth into stars and supernumeraries, produces in our own circles delightful people and nobodies—for so are the listeners and admirers generally and uncourteously termed.

But there are various kinds of delightful people beyond the mere entertainers. If there is a family rather higher in life than yourselves, or moving in a sphere you think more of than your own, notwithstanding they may have formerly *snubbed* you, it is astonishing, when you get introduced to them, and at last asked to their house, what delightful people you find them. If you know two young persons who have tumbled into an engagement with one another under tolerably favourable circumstances, and visit each other's friends for the first time, you will be enchanted with the accounts of what "delightful people" they are; how *very* friendly the mother was, and how well the sisters played, and made coloured-paper dust-collectors. Persons who have large houses, give dinners, and keep carriages and private boxes—gentlemen who have been all along the



coast of the Mediterranean, and tell most extraordinary anecdotes until they themselves really believe that their adventures have happened—authors who have written a book which has proved a hit by chance, to the astonishment of everybody, and no one more than the writers—acquaintances who have the happy knack of cordially agreeing with you upon every subject, and applauding everything you do, thinking quite differently all the while—worn-out “bits of quality tumbled into decay,” as Miss Lucretia M‘Tab says, who honour families of questionable *caste* with their acquaintance, and join all their parties by the tenour of relating stories of by-gone greatness, and random recollections of defunct high circles; all these, and many more, had we time to enumerate them, are “delightful people.” But we proceed to consider the class it is our wish to place more especially under the inspection of the reader.

We called one day upon a lady of our acquaintance, who was about to give a large evening party; and upon being ushered into the drawing-room, found the whole family in high glee at the contents of a note they had just received. Our intimacy prompted us to inquire the purport of the oblong billet that had so much delighted them.

“Oh!” said Ellen, the eldest daughter, “the Lawsons have accepted—all of them are coming!”

“And who are the Lawsons?” we ventured to ask.

“My goodness, Albert!” exclaimed everybody at once, with an excitement which nearly caused us, being of a nervous temperament, to tilt backwards off the apology for a chair on which we were seated—one of those slim ricketty specimens of upholstery, which inspire stout gentlemen with such nervous dread, when one is handed to them. “Is it possible you don’t know the Lawsons?”

We confessed with shame our ignorance of the parties in question.

"They are such *delightful people*," continued the second female olive-branch, Margaret. "We were so afraid they would not come, because they are almost always engaged; so we sent their invitation nearly a month ago."

"And you have only just received their reply?" we subjoined. "It looks as if they had waited for something else that didn't come."

"Oh, no," said Ellen, almost offended. "Mrs. Lawson is always *so* charmed with everything at our house, and says our parties are always *so* pleasant, and that we manage things *so* well."

"And she told me, the last time she was here," added Margaret, "that she could not have believed the whole of the supper was made at home, if she had not been told. And I am sure she liked it, because she ate so much."

"And what does this family do to make them so delightful?" we inquired.

"Oh, almost everything," said Ellen. "Mr. Lawson plays an admirable rubber, and Mrs. Lawson knows nearly all the great people of the day, and can tell a great deal of their private histories. Bessy is a perfect Mrs. Anderson on the piano, and Cynthia——"

"Who?" we interrupted, somewhat rudely.

"Cynthia—isn't it a pretty name? She is such a delightful girl—sings better than any one you ever heard in private."

"Then, Tom is such an oddity, and such a nice fellow," continued Margaret. "He imitates Macready and Buckstone, so that you would not know the difference, and sings the drollest songs! He can whistle just like a bird,

play tunes upon a stick, and conjure with rout-cakes at supper."

"And you should hear him do the two cats, where he makes you believe that they talk real words!" chimed in Ellen.

"And what is this wonder?" we asked.

"He's a lawyer," said Ellen; "but I don't think he much likes his profession."

We thought so too. No man who did the two cats, or imitated Macready and Buckstone, ever did like his profession, unless he was an actor at once.

"You will see them here on Friday," said Margaret, "and then you can form your own opinions; but I am certain you will like them. Hark! there's a double knock at the door."

"Don't peep at the window, Margaret; they will see you," said Ellen to her sister, who was endeavouring to discover who the visitors were by taking a covert observation through the bars of a birdcage.

"It's those horrid Wiltons!" exclaimed Margaret. "Do ring again, Ellen. What a singular thing it is servants are never in the way when a double knock comes at the door."

The new-comers entered the room, and at the same time we left: not, however, before our fair young friends had told "those horrid Wiltons" how angry they were with them for not calling more frequently, and how delighted they felt now they had come at last. We were sorry to find their pretty lips could let out such little falsehoods, and with such excellent grace.

Friday evening arrived, as in the common course of things every Friday evening must do if you wait for it;

and about ten o'clock, after a shilling's-worth of shake, rattle, and altercation, we alighted from a cab at our friends' house, and tripped into the library, where tea and coffee was going on, with a lightness that only dress boots and white kids can inspire.

Several visitors were there before us, as well as one of Margaret's brothers, who said, in a low voice, as we entered—

“ My dear friend, let me introduce you to some delightful people. Mrs. Lawson, allow me to present to you Mr. —— ”

“ Will you take tea or coffee, sir ? ” said the maid, at the same time.

We were so overcome with being thus suddenly confronted with the stars, that we think we bowed to the maid, and said we were happy to make her acquaintance ; and merely exclaimed, “ Coffee, if you please,” as Mrs. Lawson inclined her head to ourselves.

We went up stairs, and entered the ball-room, where our friends had just received intelligence that “ the Lawsons had arrived ! ”

The first portion of a party is always the same. And it was not until the evening was somewhat advanced, and they had made sure that everybody was arrived, that the powers of the Lawsons came into full play,—at least, as regarded the young people ; for the governor had been at whist ever since he first arrived, and Mrs. Lawson's feathers were ubiquitously perceptible, waving and bending apparently in every part of the room at once ; talking to all the old ladies in turn, fishing for compliments for her own daughters by admiring theirs, and smiling, with angelic benignity, upon every young man concerning whose expectations she had been agreeably informed.

The junior exhibition commenced by Bessy delighting the company with a rondo by Herz, in the most approved skyrocket style of that great master; being a Parisian composition, introducing variations upon the popular airs, "*Rien, mes bons enfans, allez toujours,*" "*La Pierre de Newgate,*" and "*Joli Nez,*" from the opera of *Jacque Sheppard*. As it was not above twenty pages in length, every one was quite charmed,—indeed, they could almost have heard it again; and the manner in which Miss Lawson sprung at the keys, and darted up and down the flats and sharps, and twitched her shoulders, and tickled the piano into convulsions, and jerked about upon the music-stool, was really astonishing, and thunderstruck everybody; except the young lady and gentleman who



Musical Gymnastics.

were flirting at the end of the room after a waltz, and actually appeared more engaged with their own conversation than they did with the fair Bessy's performance, which at last concluded amidst universal applause.

There was another quadrille, and then we were informed that Miss Cynthia Lawson was going to sing. The young lady was dressed in plain white robes, with her hair smoothed very flat round her head *à la Grisi*, whom she thought she resembled both in style of singing and features, and consequently studied all her attitudes from the clever Italian's impersonation of Norma. Of course, there was the usual delay attendant upon such



displays. The musicians had to be cleared away from the piano, in which process their wine-bottle was knocked over; then the music was in a portfolio, in the room down stairs, which nobody could find; when found, it was all placed on the music-rest topsy-turvy; and many other annoyances. At last, the lady began a bravura, upon such a high note, and so powerful, that some impudent fellows in the square, who were passing at the time, sang out, "Vari-e-ty!" in reply. Presently, a young gentleman, who was standing at her side, chanced to turn over too soon, whereupon she gave him *such* a look, that, if he had entertained any thoughts of proposing, would effectually have stopped any such rash proceeding; but her equanimity was soon restored, and she went through the aria in most dashing style, until she came to the last note, whose appearance she heralded with a roulade of wonderful execution.

"Now, don't get up," said the lady of the house, in a most persuasive and winning manner, to Miss Cynthia, when she had really concluded. "*Do* favour us with one more, if you are not too fatigued. Or, perhaps you would like a glass of wine first—a very, very little glass."

The young lady declined any refreshment, and immediately commenced a duet with her brother, whose voice, however, she entirely drowned; nevertheless, the audience were equally delighted, and as soon as she had regularly concluded, and the murmur of approbation had ceased, six young men rushed up to Ellen, with the request that they might be introduced to Miss Lawson for the next waltz. But, unfortunately, Miss Lawson did not waltz, or rather she did not choose to do so. She was aware of her liability to be called upon to sing after every dance,

and she had no notion of sitting down to the instrument with a red face and flustered *ensemble*.

"Delightful people, those Lawsons!" wheezed out a fat old gentleman in pumps and a white neckcloth, who was leaning against the wall, and looking as if he wanted a glass of ale.

"Do you know them, sir?" we asked.

"Never had the pleasure of meeting them before; but they are a charming family. Mother, a delightful person, sir—woman of the world—appears to have been thrown early into good society, and profited by it. Clever fellow



that young Lawson—ha! ha!—look at him!" And the old gentleman chuckled until he was almost choked.

We turned to gaze at the cause of his mirth, and saw Tom doing Pastorale in a most ballet-like style, jumping up and coming down upon one toe, turning round without touching the ground, and making everybody afraid of coming within a yard of him.

There are many worse periods in our existence than the twenty minutes consumed at supper at an evening party.

The reserve which prevailed at the commencement of the evening begins to wear off: you gain courage to make engagements for the first quadrille after supper, and think what a pity it is that the flight of Time cannot be delayed by pleasure, with permission to make up his lost moments by hurrying doubly quick over periods of sorrow or *ennui*. Alas! the hoary old mower generally takes it into his head to act in precisely an opposite manner.

We went down to supper with a pretty specimen of feminine mortality in white poplin on our arm, and assisted her to a cubic inch of blancmange, and an homœopathic quantity of Moselle, which she affirmed was quite sufficient; as well as took the precaution to push the tongue to the other side of the table, opposite a man who had taken off his gloves to eat, and who was immediately "troubled for a slice" fifteen times in rapid succession. By the way, talking of taking off your gloves—what is the reason that, whenever you go out, and wish your hands to look more than ordinarily white, they generally resemble raw beefsteaks?

Our *devoirs* being for the time accomplished, we looked round the room, and the first object that caught our eye between the lines of wax-candles and trifle-dishes was Mrs. Lawson's turban, with herself attached to it, bobbing about at the head of the table, in most graceful affability, to everybody. Miss Lawson was flirting with a slim young man at the sideboard, where she preferred to sup, on the pretence of not being able to find a seat; and Miss Cynthia, no doubt much fatigued by her vocal exertions, was concluding the second patty, and thinking what she should send her *cavalier servente* for next. Tom was in the centre of the table, in high glee, chirping at a sugar-plum bird in a barley-sugar cage, jerking bonbons

into his mouth by slapping his hand, making little men out of raisins and preserved ginger, and sending them to different young ladies, with his compliments; playing the cornet-à-piston upon a wafer-cake, "and many other performances too numerous to mention," as they say outside shows.

"My dear Mrs. Howard," said Mrs. Lawson to the hostess, "how delicious everything is! You always do have such very fine lobsters—where *do* you contrive to get them?"

"I am very happy you admire them," returned the lady; "but I really don't know." Which affirmation was the more singular, as she had ordered them herself from a shop in Wigmore-street.

"Lady Mary Abbeville and yourself are the only two of my friends who contrive to get large lobsters," continued Mrs. Lawson. "Lady Mary is a charming creature—do you know her?"

"I have not that pleasure," replied our friend; "and yet I have heard the name somewhere."

"Between Boulogne and Paris," cried Tom, as he exploded a cracker bonbon. "The diligence dines there."

"Now, my dear Tom, do not be so foolish," said Mrs. Lawson, in a tone of admiring reproach. "How can a diligence dine?"

"Well, I've seen it *break-fast*, however, when it has been going down a hill overloaded," replied the "talented" son. "A glass of wine, sir?" he continued, pitching upon some one opposite by chance, to make his wit appear off-hand.

The challenged individual was an overgrown young gentleman, with a very high shirt-collar. He stammered out, "With much pleasure!" and then filling up his half

glass of sherry from the nearest decanter at hand, which contained port, he made a nervous bow, and swallowed the wine as if it had been physic.

"Here's you and I sir, and two more; but we won't tell their names," exclaimed Tom, winking to the young gentleman, whose blushes increased to a fearful pitch of intensity.

The ladies had 'been gradually leaving the room for the last ten minutes, and when they had all departed we sat down to our own supper. Tom never once flagged in his drolleries. He laughed, took wine with all the old gentlemen, did the two cats, imitated Macready and Buckstone,—in fact, opened all his stores of facetiousness. He accompanied us up-stairs, and after the ladies had finished the long quadrille they were having with themselves, he sang a song about "Wanted" a something, but we do not exactly recollect what, being ourselves engaged in talking delightful absurdities to the belle in the white poplin, and endeavouring to reason down the antediluvian idea she had formed, that it was improper to waltz with any one else but her brother; in which argument we finally succeeded. However, the song was eminently successful, and threw everybody who witnessed the odd grimaces with which Tom accompanied it into delirious convulsions of laughter.

The "delightful people" left about half-past two; Mrs. Lawson declaring her girls went out so much that their health began to suffer from late hours. Tom saw them into their carriage, and then came back, pressing every other young man in the room to come to some tavern where there was a capital comic singer; but finding no one so inclined, he also took his leave. We waited until we saw the man who played the piano hammering away

with his eyes shut, and gradually going to sleep over the keys, when we thought it time to depart ourselves; and in all the happiness of a latch-key in our pocket, and the same good hat we left in the hall upon our head, we bent our steps homeward.

Two or three weeks passed away, when one morning we received an application from a young medical friend, to use our interest in obtaining for him some votes for the situation of surgeon to a dispensary in the neighbourhood, accompanied by a list of the governors. We obtained two or three promises, and at last determined to solicit Mr. Lawson, whose name we saw in the list: at the same time, we must confess that we were not a little anxious to see the "delightful people" at home—to track these lions to their own lair, and watch their natural instincts. We accordingly sallied forth, one fine day, in all the pride of unexceptionable boots and faultless gloves, and arriving at the family mansion, knocked at the door. A footman in his shirt-sleeves ran out into the area, and having looked at us, ran back again; appearing the next minute at the door, with one arm still forcing its way down the sleeve of his coat. We found the Lawsons were at home, and were shown into the drawing-room, with the assurance from the servant that his mistress would be there directly. After looking over the card-basket to see whom they knew, (which is one of our favourite employments when we are left to ourselves in a strange house,) we turned over the leaves of some albums that were lying about in company with some theological works, which, being an enemy to religious display, we thought far better suited for the closet than the drawing-room table; and in which occupation we were interrupted by the sound of voices in angry dialogue below. This was suddenly cut

short by the slamming of a door, and immediately afterwards Mrs. Lawson entered the room, looking a little red and excited, but all smiles and condescension ; begging we would be seated, and telling us how very happy she was that we had called upon her.

After a few commonplace observations and inquiries about the weather, the health of the family, the party we had lately met, and such-like exciting topics of conversation, Mrs. Lawson informed us her family were at luncheon, and begged we would join them. A strong smell of roast mutton greeted us as we descended to the dining-room, and tempted us to think that it was an early dinner. We expected to have been kept in a state of unceasing laughter throughout the whole meal, but were very much mistaken. We had not anticipated any immense fun from the papa Lawson, who was quietly enough discussing some bread and cheese ; but as the facetious Tom was there, and his gifted sisters, we calculated upon a repetition, in a certain degree, of their previous amusing powers. There was, however, nothing of the kind ; the whole party were as flat as the jug of beer that has been left out for supper, covered with a cheese-plate, on returning from the play. Bessy had evidently been quarrelling with her sister ; Cynthia contradicted her mother on every point of affirmation that Mrs. Lawson uttered ; Tom sat back in his chair, with his hands in his pocket, and his legs stretched out straight under the table ; and the good lady herself kept up such an alternation of smiles to us and black looks to the young people, that her command of countenance was perfectly marvellous. At first, we thought it probable that they were all recovering from influenza, but they looked so very healthy that we soon relinquished that opinion.

They were, however, so very quiet that when they retired, and we had mentioned the object of our visit to Mr. Lawson, who was a sensible man, (if the others had let him alone,) we summoned up courage to say that we feared we had intruded during some family discussion.

"My dear sir," he replied, "we never have anything else but family discussions here. I dare say you are surprised to see them so very different from what they are in company; but the more they *show off* when they are out, the more cross they always are at home the next day."

In these few words was contained the whole history of "delightful people"—the melancholy truth, that those who in society carry all before them by their spirits and acquirements are, at home, the most uncomfortable beings upon the face of the earth, because they cannot there find the very excitement which is almost necessary to their existence.

We have met the Lawsons several times since, and we have begun to find that their attractions sadly want variety. Mrs. Lawson tells the same anecdotes, Bessy plays the same fantasias, Cynthia warbles the identical *arias* we last heard, and Tom has a certain routine of tricks and absurdities, which he plays off in regular order during the evening. We begin to weary of these lions; although, at every *réunion* where it is our lot to meet them, there are the same number of guests charmed at their talents, who never hesitate to pronounce them most "delightful people."

THE GRISETTE.

A STORY OF PARIS.



THE period we were studying medicine in the French capital, in one of the *mansardes* that were situated at the top of our hotel—displaying those eccentric varieties of sloping walls and ceilings, that only pertain to cocklofts in England—resided one of the prettiest little girls we ever saw while we lived at Paris. We had

noticed her from the first day of our arrival; but we had never entered into conversation with her, although it was frequently our lot to meet her on the staircase in the morning, as she was about “*cherchant son petit godet de crème, et sa demi-once de café;*” such being, according to the experienced and veracious Paul de Kock, the first daily business of a Parisian grisette. It so chanced that we owed our introduction to her own hospitality, which took place under the following circumstances.

The two principal resorts of the dance-loving "*jeunes gens*" of Paris, are Constant's and Tonnelier's. The former is a handsome stone building, with a spacious and elegant *salon* on its first floor, capable of accommodating three or four hundred people. The room is brilliantly illuminated with gas, and adorned with statues and looking-glasses; and round its side a number of little tables are arranged, for those who prefer quietly sitting and sipping their wine at twelve sous a-bottle, while they watch the mazes of the quadrille and waltz. *On danse à la belle étoile, chez Tonnelier*; and, consequently, this *ginguette* only does for summer weather. The piece of ground appropriated to Terpsichore is smoothly gravelled, and lighted by a quantity of lamps suspended from wires stretching across the garden. *Cabinets particuliers*, for dinner and flirtation, surround the enclosure, with alcoves beneath them, similar to the supper-boxes at Vauxhall; and at both places the band is composed of ten or a dozen performers, who make a demand of five sous for each quadrille.

The balls of the Barrière du Mont Parnasse were one of our most constant haunts at Paris. The Chaumière, on the boulevard of the same name, was all very well in its way; but if you did not know a great many of the company, you were not likely to procure many partners. At the *barrière*, however, there was a greater freedom of introduction, added to which, you saved a few francs which your *billet d'entrée* to Tivoli or Ranelagh would have cost you. Many, many happy and careless evenings have we passed there; the waltz, the wine, and the music, alike lending their powerful auxiliaries to our excitement: and many times have we returned we hardly knew how—

five in a *citadine*, or three in a cab, awaking the lazy echoes of the Rue de Vaugirard and Chambre des Pairs with our student's chorus.

One evening in October, just as autumn was closing its theatre by bringing out some of its best pieces, previously to the arrival of the new lessee, we came home in our usual good temper on *fête* evenings; and, as we had left the ball-room red-hot from the *galoppe*, and found ourselves rather chilly from the change of temperature, we determined on indulging in a little *vin chaud*. In furtherance of this object, as soon as we entered our apartment, we commenced lighting the fire, or rather, endeavouring to do so, at the expense of an entire box of lucifers, and two sheets of the *Times* newspaper, that we had received from home in the morning, containing the intelligence that the lady of somebody or another of our acquaintance had added one more contribution to the bread-crum and batter-pudding consumers of the nursery. But, lighting a fire in Paris is very different to performing the same task in England. You must first sweep up all the ashes of the day before into a heap; and having done this with satisfaction to yourself, you bring the iron "dogs" together, and place three pieces of wood upon them, which you have dragged from their depository under the bed, or in the top drawer, or along with your tea-things, or out of your carpet-bag, or one of the like receptacles for *bois à brûler* in French lodgings. You next pick out all the pieces of charcoal you can find on the hearth, about the size of a small cork; and, this finished, you drag an "*allumette chimique*" across the sole of your shoe, and kindle one of the aforesaid pieces of charcoal by its aid, placing the live ember among the bits of wood; and then you begin to blow gently, first

with your mouth, next with your old cap, which had been torn the week before in a row at the Bal Montesquieu, and, finally, you call in the aid of the bellows.

But, whether there was a spell against our fire-place that night, or whether the woody fibres of the fuel had changed into asbestos in our absence, we know not—all we could do, we could not raise a flame; and, in groping amongst the ashes and charcoal in search of a spark, we formed no inapt personation of the young gentleman on the medal of the Royal Humane Society, with the exception that we were properly arrayed in shirt, shoes, and trousers, which the said young gentleman appears to have dispensed with altogether. At last, we got angry, and throwing the bellows away, with a jerk that sent them sliding over the polished floor to the other end of the room, we determined to throw ourselves upon the generosity of our *voisins* for “*un peu de feu*,” a bequest we ourselves had often granted in our turn. We accordingly looked out of the window into the court formed by the walls of the house, to see if there was a fire gleaming in any of the apartments; a doubtful speculation, we will allow, for the French never light a fire before there is occasion. To our great comfort, however, we saw some intermittent flashes illumining the room of our little neighbour, the grisette. We knew it was her window, for she was a *blanchisseuse de fin*, and sundry *jabots*, *chemisettes*, and *fichus* fluttered in the obscurity.

“*Qui frappe?*” asked a soft voice, as we knocked at the door of the *mansarde*, and, shovel in hand, awaited admission. “*C’est moi, mademoiselle.*” (We addressed her as we should have done a *demoiselle comme il faut*, for the grisettes of Paris are particular.) “*C’est moi; Mon-*

sieur S——— : I am come to beg a little *braise* to make some *vin chaud*."

"*Volontiers*," she replied; and she opened the door at once, allowing us to enter the small neatly-arranged chamber.

It was one of the highest of the garrets, and certainly not above ten or twelve feet square; yet it was astonishing how the numerous *meubles* were arranged in it, and without any appearance of confusion. The little camp-bed stood against the wall at the low part of the pitch of the roof; and the crockery fire-place was placed at the other end of the room, surrounded by several of those odd earthenware pipkins, that supply the place of saucepans in the *ménage* of the Quartier Latin. The little square basket, or *cabas*, (the invariable accompaniment of a *grisette*,) was suspended over the bed; some flowers were placed in a blown-glass egg-cup on the mantelpiece; two or three prints from the series of the *Cours de droit* in the *Charivari* were pinned against the wall, and a birdcage, containing two canaries, stood on the drawers, by the side of the pie-dish-looking basin and milk-jug-shaped ewer, which formed the auxiliaries to the *toilette*.

"You will be some time lighting your fire, Monsieur," said our fair companion, as we were picking out some red-hot pieces from the *four*. "If you please, you can warm your wine here, and it will give you less trouble."

There was so much sincerity in the invitation, that we accepted it as freely as it was offered, and having run down to our room to bring up the wine and its concomitants, and lock the door after us, we commenced the preparation of the *vin chaud*. Oh! if our friends in England could have seen us, whom they thought all diligence and

discretion, sitting on one side the fire-place, in a blue velvet cap, with a gold band, mulling wine; with a pretty French girl for our *vis-à-vis*, ironing habit-shirts and singing Louisa Puget's songs, just as if she was by herself, what a name we should have acquired amongst the old ladies of our acquaintance, who thought us *so* steady! Not but that we always had an unconquerable dread of being called a "good young man." Understand us, reader: we had no wish to acquire the reputation of a dissipated student, or profligate idler—far, far from it; but, when we looked amongst the circle of our own friends, we found all the so-called "amiable young women," and all the "good young men," such extraordinary *muffs*, that we were never afterwards anxious for the appellation.

Well, we manufactured our *brevage*, and of course offered our pretty host a portion of it. She was not above accepting our libation, and we gradually entered into conversation. She told us that she earned nearly two francs a-day at her vocation, but that there was a prospect of her soon bettering herself (as country maids-of-all-work say, when they leave a place of six guineas a-year), for she was engaged to be married, and her *amant* had a good situation in an *imprimerie* on the Quay Voltaire. "*C'est un très bon enfant*," she said; "*mais un peu étourdi*." After this, she asked us to sing an English song, with which we complied, to the best of our abilities, in attempting something we had heard in London the night we passed "the Hall;" and then, in her turn, she treated us with "Son Nom," "Mire dans mes yeux tes yeux," and two or three others of the same bearing. Altogether, there was such a confiding simplicity and joyous air about this poor girl, living in a garret, and earning but forty

sous a-day, that we would not have distressed her feelings by any rude sally for the world. And, when we bade her good night, although in the prodigality of our bachelor hearts, we would have lived upon bread and water the whole of the week for a single kiss, we conquered our gallantry by our principle, and merely bowed, cap in hand, as we thanked her for her hospitality.

A day or two after those events, we received an invitation from a worthy friend of ours who resided at Versailles, to go and spend a few weeks with him at his house. Invitations to stay in a French family are something like angels' visits, so we immediately accepted for fear he should change his mind. We had, moreover, a small brother who luxuriated upon potatoe salad and *potage à l'oseille* at a school in the Avenue St. Cloud, in order to learn French perfectly; and we thought we might as well be near him, in order to give him an occasional meal at a *restaurateur's*, to keep him from quite starving until the holidays. Well, we "locked up all our treasures," and sent our boxes to a fellow student to be taken care of; and took our place, one fine morning, in the lumbering overgrown rabbit-hutches, termed *gondolles*, above all other things in the world, that started from some of the partially unexplored regions between the back of the Tuileries and the Rue St. Honoré; and, passing through Sèvres and a country which appeared to be inhabited solely by *traiteurs* and *marchands de vin*, we arrived at Versailles in two hours after our departure from Paris, for the railway was not yet completed. It is not our intention to describe what we saw during our month's *séjour*. Every room, picture, and waterwork has been so often alluded to in books, that such a task is rendered perfectly unnecessary. It will suffice to say, that we knew everything

by heart by the time we left; and, having seen the grand fountains spouting out like Brobdignag water-plugs, and walked blindfolded along the *tapis vert*, we returned to Paris, not very unwilling to get back to a little amusement; for, independently of the palace and its attractions, Versailles is a living grave.

We were sitting in the porter's lodge of the hotel on the evening of our arrival—collecting our letters and newspapers, and learning what events had occurred in our absence, from the *garçon*—when our little friend, the *blanchisseuse*, came in for her key, and went up stairs. We do not think she saw us, as we were partly concealed by the door: but we were able to remark a great alteration in her since we left. Her features were pale and sharpened, with that drooping expression termed by the multitude “pinched in,” but where the anatomist can trace every corner and process of the facial bones, but too plainly intelligible under their wasted covering. Her eyes were red and glistening; and she had lost the light elastic *pas de Française* with which she was accustomed to trip about the house.

“*Elle est bien changée, monsieur,*” said the *garçon*, as we followed her with our eyes along the court. “She was going to be married, but her *amant* has left her, and is paying his addresses in another quarter.”

“She still lives here, then?”

“*Oui, monsieur: mais la pauvre petite pleure; elle se désole, et elle ne mange pas.*”

The last words were pronounced in a very dolorous accent: it was evident that Antoine thought it the greatest sign of grief to give up eating.

“And when was the agreement broken off?” we asked.

“*Monsieur*, it was about three days after you left. She

met him at Constant's one *fête* evening, but he scarcely noticed her, and danced entirely with another *amie*. She came home at night, and cried a great deal in the lodge, and the old lady in No. 14 sent her down a little liqueur. She takes it sadly to heart and neglects everything else."

We were, indeed, very sorry to hear all this, and thought that we would try and comfort her—nay, we anticipated a pleasing task in so doing. It is so interesting—so eloquent, that comfort which an English student of two-and-twenty can offer to a pretty French girl of eighteen. Of course, we meant our consolation to be friendly, and Platonic—could it be otherwise? And yet we have sometimes thought how terribly foolish the theories of the old philosopher of Athens were!

We finished our conversation, lighted a candle, and retired to our room. Our boxes had been forwarded by a porter, and we had a few minutes' occupation in arranging them, and looking out appointments that had been so quietly reposing for the last month. At last, the shirts and stockings were all laid in their respective drawers; the boots were pulled out of the carpet-bag, and placed outside the door; and, when we had routed out our night-apparel from the packet we had brought from Versailles, we jumped into bed, and began to read, according to custom. We always had a terrible habit of reading in bed, and plead guilty to thinking it dangerous; but it is so comfortable! In the daytime, choose what hour you will, the pleasant images which your reading has left flitting before your imagination are liable to be instantaneously and unromantically disturbed by the common and dull realities of your existence. But at night it is different, for all is then still around you: your fancy

follows the creations of the writer, free and unrestrained ; and if gentle and soothing thoughts should chance to arise from the bearing of the subject you have been studying, you have nought to arrest them but the power of the "drowsy god," which, if it comes as an interrupter of happiness, at least places a barrier to the advance of sorrow.

Eh bien ! we read, and thought, and snuffed the candle, and read again, and, at last, went to sleep ; and, in the common course of events, we woke again the next morning. But, as we went down stairs, on our way to breakfast at Martin's, we did not meet Eugenie, as had been our former custom. The *garçon* told us she had not passed the lodge that morning ; but he thought she was much distressed the night before, and had slept later from thorough weariness of heart and spirits. We returned some common-place answer, and walked over to the *restaurant*, in company with a copy of the *Times*, whose elephantine proportions awfully astonished the habitual readers of the *Siècle*, the *Presse*, and the *Gazette des Tribunaux*.

* * * * *

The same evening that we returned from Versailles, Eugenie had been to one of the balls at the Barrière du Mont-Parnasse. She had gone thither with no idea of pleasure or amusement, but in the hope of seeing her faithless suitor, and procuring some explanation from him of his conduct towards her. In one of her expectations she had not been disappointed, for he was there, but not alone—his new love had accompanied him, and they were dancing together the whole evening. It were foolish to say that he was not moved at the sight of poor Eugenie's pale face and altered *mine* ; but he pretended to carry it

off with a sneer and laugh, and he answered her in slighting and careless words. He lessened her before her rival—a trial, which, having been once undergone, a woman *never forgets*. Repulsed and crushed, she left the room; but, as she turned round on quitting it, she perceived him whirling in the rapid train of waltzers with his usual unconcern, probably little thinking of the heart that he had spurned and broken that evening.

In that terrible calm of wretchedness which locks up those tears we could find so much relief from indulging in, Eugenie arrived at home. She silently and mechanically took her key from the porter's lodge, (it was there we had seen her,) and then hurried to her own room. She felt about in the obscurity for her *allumettes*, and, lighting her candle, remained standing at the table for several minutes, fixed as a statue, and scarcely betraying any signs of life or being. And then a fearful resolve for the first time came over her: steadily, and with a calm almost supernatural, she closed the door and windows, and shut up the aperture of the chimney with a square board, on which some gaudily-coloured pictures of dancing and diversion formed a harsh contrast to her own feelings. She took the small *fourneau*, which we had used on the evening we first met her, from its corner, and placed it on the table. Her entire stock of charcoal was next collected on its grate, and, kindling a piece in the candle, she deposited it amongst the rest, raising with her own breath the poisonous vapour that was to deprive her of existence. The tiny ember crackled and sparkled in the current of air, and by degrees communicated its glowing life to the whole mass, as small particles of white ashes began to fill the atmosphere, and gradually to settle on the table and surrounding articles. A cold blast

poured in from the opening beneath the door—she deliberately impeded it with a shawl laid along the floor; and, hanging what articles of clothing were at hand against the ill-fastened windows, she sank down on her low bed, and awaited her fate. Before long, she began to breathe with difficulty; she seemed to experience the same sensation that she would have felt in a small crowded apartment, or in the low *loges* of a close and densely-filled theatre. She moved her arms around her, as if to throw off some impending coverture; the circulation of air thus produced somewhat revived her, and she respired more freely: but in an instant afterwards the oppression returned. Then her pulse quickened, and a violent palpitation ensued. Throb—throb!—her heart was leaping in her bosom, as if it would force its way through the membrane that contained it, and its deadened and heavy beat was marked and audible in the perfect stillness of the room, broken only by the tinkling of the charcoal consuming in the *fourneau*. The distant chimes of the Luxembourg clock told the hour of ten—where would she be when they next sounded? The room would be a chamber of death—her bed would become a bier to sustain a corpse, and that corpse would be herself!

The candle, overpowered by the heavy and poisoned atmosphere, began to burn with a dull and oppressed flame round its tall black wick; and the poor birds in the cage, distressed for air, were fluttering and gasping on their perches, or rapidly jumping from one to the other, and passing their beaks quickly and successively between the wires of their prison. An indefinable sense of alarm now stole over her, and her thoughts became visionary and delirious. The house seemed giving way beneath her; the walls of her room had fallen in, and some

unseen power was forcing her towards a precipice into the street below! She clung to the bed, and cried aloud: the floor appeared to sink, and she was going with its ruins, and without the power to help herself.

Suddenly, her sensations changed, and she became once more conscious of her situation; but her ideas were confused and indefinite. A painful tightness of the chest succeeded: her eyes swam with giddiness, and her brain seemed endowed with separate life and motion. Then a heavy murmur, like the drone of a hundred bees, filled her ears, and her sight forsook her: an unconquerable drowsiness stole over her, and she sank into a deep and heavy slumber. From that slumber she never awoke again!

When we returned from breakfast, we found the hotel a scene of terrible excitement. The proprietor, alarmed at the unusual non-appearance of Eugenie, had sent the *concierge* to knock at her apartment, and see if she was indisposed. The old woman returned, affirming that she could obtain no answer, although she had made a grand *tapage* against the door; and, in consequence, the landlord ascended with two *gens d'armes*, and broke the door open. In an instant the whole truth was apparent, as the dense and suffocating vapour still hung heavily about the room; the birds were lying dead at the bottom of their cage, and the now lifeless body of the hapless Grisette was extended on the bed. At this moment we returned home, and, at the entreaties of the *concierge*, hurried up stairs: not that we had an idea of being able to render any assistance when we heard the circumstances; but, in cases of accident, be they fatal or otherwise, a medical man is always expected to do something by the crowd of bystanders. We threw open the windows, dashed the body with cold water, and, finally, endeavoured to open the jugular vein.

A few sluggish drops of black blood oozed out as we withdrew the lancet, but that was all ; and we were convinced that she was beyond the chance of human recovery. We closed her eyes, that were directed, lustreless and vacant, towards the *fourneau*, and left the officials in attendance to draw out their accustomed report.

Two days afterwards, a young man entered the portal of Notre Dame, and ascended the tower in company with one of the *gardiens*, whose business it is to exhibit the curiosities of this venerable cathedral for a few sous. He mounted rapidly to one of the top galleries of the southern tower, and lingered an instant at the spot from whence Quasimodo is made to hurl the impious Claude Frollo on to the square below, in that beautiful romance, which has cast so wild and mysterious a charm around those blackened and mouldering towers. Suddenly he drew the attention of the *gardien* to a crowd of idlers on the Quai de l'Archevêche, and, seizing the opportunity, climbed over the parapet, and threw himself headlong down upon the pavement of the Parvis—a fall of two hundred and twenty feet ! Some students, who were loitering on the steps of the Hôtel Dieu, ran up to the spot, and a crowd almost instantaneously collected. In three minutes, the crushed and bloody remains were being carried to the Morgue, and before long the body was recognised as that of the faithless lover of the poor Grisette.*

* The leading incidents of the above sketch are no fiction. They occurred in Paris, in November, 1838 ; and the writer was cheapening some books on the Pont St. Michel when the *dénouement* took place.

THE PREVAILING EPIDEMIC.

WE request our fair readers will not turn away from *this* article in disgust, upon reading its title, with the idea that we are going to be exceedingly professional, and plunge into a grave medical dissertation upon the influenza. Generally diffused as that malady has been, since its invention a few years back, we leave it for our scientific contemporaries to define its minute pathology. The disease we are about to describe has been quite as rapid and extensive in its progress, with the curious distinction that it appears to have confined its attacks to the fair sex alone; and where they have once been inoculated with it, its consequences have been as certain and incurable as hydrophobia.

It is generally the custom of the table orator in making speeches, preparatory to proposing the health of any individual, to leave his hearers as much in the dark concerning the object of his panegyrics as his ingenuity will allow, whilst he keeps assuring his guests that he is confident they must know the individual to whom he is alluding. This is done with the view of giving additional interest to the speech, and by bringing the name out at its termination (often an entirely different person to the one whom the auditors had already settled on in their own minds), of producing the sensation which our neighbours in France call a *coup de théâtre*. We might do the same kind of thing in the present case; but we fear its symptoms are so very palpable that the disease would be recognised before the reader got through a quarter of a page, and the excitement of our intended revelation be forestalled. We,

therefore, name this dangerous malady at once, and discarding all technical nomenclature, term it the *Berlin Wool Infatuation*.

The plan adopted in most medical discussions, of tracing the progress of any particular epidemic, instead of at once finding out a remedy for it, may be followed with advantage in the present instance. Like the cholera, it is supposed originally to have come from the east. We will not, however, go back even to the dark ages of the Bayeux tapestry for its commencement, or to the later epoch of the patiently embroidered arras, for which the great Raffaele painted his immortal cartoons as designs. Neither will we swell our paper by details of the first manufactory of tapestry at Paris, set up by the good Henri Quatre, to which he invited the great artists of Flanders to contribute their designs; nor the far more celebrated establishment of the Gobelins, instituted under Louis XIV., from whose looms the hangings of the noblest houses in France were supplied. Were we poetically disposed, we could indulge in glowing *tableaux* of the “fayre ladyes” of the olden time, embroidering the surcoats of their professed champions for the approaching tourney—

“As it were a mede,

All ful of freshe floures, white and rede,”

as old Geoffrey Chaucer hath it; or working quietly at their frames in the absence of their liege lords, who were fighting for the “holie crosse” in Palestine. We could tell how they wove their own fair tresses amidst the gold and silver threads of the scarf, which they gave as the guerdon of their true love’s valour; and how, surrounded by their handmaidens in the cool pleasaunce of the garden, with the mavis pouring out its glad minstrelsy from the

thick foliage; or, in the bay window of the hall, through which the bright sunbeam darted so joyously as it threw the colours of the stained glass in broken light upon the armour and carved woodwork, they elaborated those large tapestries, which now hang mildewed and time-worn from the wainscot of the chambers of our old English homes. But, unfortunately, we have a keener sense of the real than the romantic; and, passing over the glamour with which antiquity invests the olden time, we will discourse merely upon the existing infatuation of the present age.

The foundation of the epidemic first occurred some sixty or eighty years back—it may be a century—in the shape of samplers: oblong pieces of coarse dingy canvass, worked with certain hieroglyphics, which may still occasionally be seen in cottages, and the back parlours of primitive settlers in country towns. We conceive that the sampler had for its object the instruction of the ladies of the last century in the science and mysteries of marking. We are led to this supposition from the body of the work being generally formed of mystic characters composing various alphabets, which looked as if their component letters had perpetually suffered from rheumatic fever, and were quite out of joint; and, had it not been for their coming in the usual order, requiring extreme patience and ingenuity to decipher. But when the fair embroideress chanced to be of an imaginative or artistical turn of mind, her fancy took bolder flights than the mere representation of the alphabets. A group of remarkably conical trees, like large strawberries standing on their stalks, and two figures with green apples, as large by comparison as Dutch cheeses, in their hands, allowed by courtesy to represent Adam and Eve, were intended altogether as a view of Paradise; whilst a coloured spiral, like the twisted end of

a corkscrew, winding round the stem of one of the above trees, indicated the presence of the serpent. The situation, assigned to these humble opponents of Miss Linwood, was generally over the mantel-piece, between two crockery little boys very scantily dressed, affording a resting-place for two porcupine quills, a glass pipe, an ornamented pen with a tassel at the end, and some peacocks' feathers; all so ingeniously arranged that if you moved one of them the rest were sure to tumble down simultaneously. There, was, however, some use in these productions. The knowledge of marking gained in their formation assisted the washerwoman in her correct distribution of the articles entrusted to her charge; the red and blue birds, little men and women in quadrangular apparel, and red houses with black windows, underneath the alphabets, had no particular end, it is true; but they appear, in the opinion of the maker, to have been essential to the formation of the true sampler.

These were long popular, until "the diffusion of knowledge dispelling the clouds of ignorance," as they say at literary institutions, brought with it great improvements. Parents were gratified by their daughters returning from school at the end of the half year, laden with dinner mats, urn rugs, and decanter stands, worked all over with the most curious flowers, extraordinary fruit, gaudy shells, and impossible sea-weed that ever existed; and bordered by tufts of coloured worsted as large as oranges; which, if charged for in the bill equal to the price of corresponding articles at fancy fairs, were still of some service, and in the scale of domestic ingenuity far beyond the shell pin-cushions, butterfly penwipers, ornamented oil jars, and multitudinous perforated-card abominations, which are

denominated "fancy-work" by governesses, and "dust-collectors" by intelligent housekeepers.

By degrees the samplers entirely disappeared, and we began to think that the art of marking, like that of illuminating missals, would pass away from the earth, and be only spoken of as a thing that was. Indelible inks started up in legions as the needlework declined, pounce rose to a premium, and embroidery appeared fast sinking to oblivion. But we were mistaken—we were only upon the eve of a fresh outbreak, which, spurning all control, soon spread its influence far and wide, running from one family to another (that is to say, amidst the female branches), with the certainty of the plague; and quite as difficult to eradicate when it had once taken hold of the system.

Its first attack was as unassuming as it was insidious. A few simple wreaths of flowers, composed, upon close inspection, of small bright coloured squares, appeared in the linen-drapers' windows, modestly displayed amongst the other goods. We did not think much of them at the time, until we went one evening to a small social party, where the ladies had been requested to "bring their work," as the meeting was quite friendly. Now we always fight very shy of those minor *réunions* where ladies are requested to "bring their work." We look upon them, generally speaking, as very shady affairs, enlivened only by that faint amateur chirping which people, from courtesy, denominate "a little music;" and where, when the good folks of the house asked you to "come and take your bread and cheese with them, and they really meant it," you found they were gentlemen and ladies of their word, as you seldom got anything else, unless it was the occasional luxury of a baked potatoe. We were aware the

term "bringing your work" signified carrying a delicate little basket, containing an equally delicate pair of scissors; a tiny reel, a lilliputian housewife, a few very minikin pins, and certain odd-shaped scraps of muslin, intended, we believe, for cuffs; with little triangular bits of linen—we do not recollect their proper name, but we know they have something to do with the arm of a shirt, having observed them at the shoulder-joint articulation of our own. These affairs are presumed never to have been undertaken with a view to their ultimate completion, but to have served as perpetual excuses for idleness and conversation throughout many tea-parties.

However, we went on the evening in question, and there we saw one young lady who had brought neither muslin nor Irish, but a long strip of black velvet covered with canvass, through the apertures of which she was, with unwearying energy, pushing a stout needle, that pulled after it a train of what we, in the innocence of our hearts, termed coloured worsted, but which was pronounced, with an air of importance, to be 'Berlin Wool.' We were, moreover, indulged by the fair operative with the further information, that when six or seven feet of the velvet had been worked in a similar manner, according to the painted pattern at her side, on whose surface she appeared to be making continuous and intricate calculations with the point of her needle, the *ensemble* would form a bell-pull, as soon as the canvass threads were drawn out. A slight spasm convulsed our frame; we saw the consequences likely to result from the introduction of this species of manufacture, and we were not mistaken. We were at that time in the habit of occasionally passing a shop where the patterns were shown, mixed with the darperry; and the first alarming symptom we discovered was the delineation

tion of a Turk smoking an imposing pipe, in a temporary divan of the "newest town prints." This somewhat excited our apprehension, which was not lessened when we next perceived a Mameluke horseman galloping fiercely over plains of mousseline-de-laine and gros de Naples, as well as mounted Arabs prancing at the feet of pyramids of chalis, at "twelve and sixpence the complete dress," and red-capped Greeks with long guns and mustachios, apparently guarding boxes of ribands, ticketed at *per* yard, in the most approved style of Brobdignagian twopences and Lilliputian three-farthings.

Anticipating what this would lead to, we were not much surprised on calling one morning upon another young lady, also addicted to fancy-work, who had promised to knit us a purse, or a watch-guard, or something of the kind, to find her very busy at an immense wooden frame, which looked like the skeleton of a cheval glass, surrounded by skeins of wool embracing every tint of the rainbow, and, in our imagination, a hundred more besides, transferring the lineaments of the identical Turk, pipe and all, to a yard and a half of chocolate-coloured cloth, which she gave us to understand was intended for the decoration of a low-seated, high-backed, old-curiosity-shop-looking chair, that appeared to have been lately promoted from the lumber-loft to the drawing-room. Of course we admired it, and thought it exquisitely beautiful—what else could we do?—for the young lady was very pretty, and her white arms appeared to great advantage on the dark cloth. But we were conscious of much evil in the performance; and although we mustered up some pretty compliments about Ariadne, and Sappho at her loom, and wishes that we were Phaon, and the like species of soft nothings that single gentlemen feel called upon to utter under similar

circumstances, yet we inwardly prophesied that ere long every house would be turned, by a species of domestic pantomime, into an amateur Kidderminster factory. Our predictions were soon verified by the uncontrollable rapidity with which the patterns now spread about town; and the attraction of the print-shops was completely eclipsed by the more prominent display of gaudy pictures in the fancy-wool warehouses. Even the Turks, Greeks, and Mamelukes fell in public estimation; and yielded to large copies of German prints, bearing extraordinary and unpronounceable names, to the great joy of the dentists, who derived a considerable income from the dislocated jaws of the rash individuals who attempted to utter them; and these again were speedily superseded by Berlin editions of our most popular engravings, cut up into myriads of tiny parallelograms, and painted all sorts of vivid and unmatchable colours.

And having thus reached the climax of the disease, it behoves us to give a few cases in illustration; after the manner of medical gentlemen who endeavour to write themselves into practice by publishing a book—with the exception that our cases are well authenticated, and theirs are generally the ingenious conception of a vivid imagination.

CASE I.

Miss A——, a young lady aged one-and-twenty, was exceedingly clever at every species of domestic accomplishment, even to making pinafores for her little brothers, contributions to the “Ladies’-baby’s-bib-and-tucker-general-delivery-loan-association!” and capucines for herself, as well as all kinds of alterations to make the wardrobe of last year’s suit the fashions of the present, until she chanced

to go on a visit to some young friends, where it is supposed she caught the infatuation. For a time she was content with embroidering scrolls and wreaths, or little mats for shells, china, and gimcracks on the cheffonier; but was, at last, violently seized with "Bolton Abbey in the olden time," and "Napoleon crossing the Alps." Since this severe attack she has never been known to hem even a pocket-handkerchief, and her *boudoir*, which was the pattern of order, is covered with small shreds and ends of wool littering about in every corner. At present she has few lucid intervals, and should this distressing state continue, it is feared her friends must place her in confinement at a stall in a bazaar, where her melancholy aberration of intellect may be productive of some little emolument; her friends having discovered that the patterns and wools are not purchased for nothing. She has thrown out some mysterious hints about working a hearth-rug for the drawing-room, in small forget-me-nots, which her friends are endeavouring to oppose, as, should it succeed, it is feared she may take it into her head to cover all the chairs, including the music-stool.

CASE II.

Mrs. B——, considered herself very economical, and a good manager; her enemies pronounced her exceedingly stingy, and a thorough screw. The carpet of Mrs. B——'s parlour began to look rather worn and *thready*, and she forthwith adopted the following plan to get a new one at a small outlay. She commenced paying an undeviating series of visits to all her young friends who were clever in the Berlin line; and always admired their patterns as "the sweetest things she had ever seen." When the bait had been swallowed, she threw out hints of her intense

desire to possess a specimen of the young lady's work; and the next day forwarded a piece of eighteen-inch-square canvass, with the request that it might be worked in any pattern the aforesaid young lady chose. By much perseverance she was enabled to procure a sufficient number of squares to form an entire carpet, which was eventually laid down, to the admiration of ecstatic visitors, and the great satisfaction of Mrs. B——.

CASE III.

Mr. C—— was a young gentleman with an income of six hundred a year, who came to reside in a country town for study and retirement. He was immediately attacked by every marriageable young lady in the place, and received more purses, damson cheese, table-covers, currant jam, fire-screens, little worsted jugs to keep half-pence in, potted beef, and pills, than he knew what to do with. At last the Berlin wool changed the style of all these delicate attentions. The first shot aimed at him was in the shape of a rug for his coffee-pot, with his initials done in German text letters. Next came a small kettle-holder, worked with the representation of a very blue kettle on a very red fire, and bearing the motto "MIND! IT BOILS;" and lastly, having sprained his foot, a few days after the accident he received nine pairs of slippers—some covered with witches and demons, others embroidered with roses and dahlias; but the majority worked in coloured vandykes like a crimped rainbow. His footstool was eventually carried away by force to be turned into an ottoman; and his easy chair was abducted in the same manner to have its back adorned by "Sir Walter Scott in his study at Abbotsford." So acutely did poor Mr. C. suffer from these unflinching attacks, that he is presumed to have run

away in the middle of the night, leaving directions with his housekeeper that the immense accumulation of fancy work should be sold without reserve, and the proceeds applied towards the formation of a fund for building a Persecuted Bachelor's Asylum.

It will be at once perceived from the above melancholy documents, that the mania has reached a fearful pitch of intensity. But there is an old saying which teaches us the undeniable truth that when things are as bad as they possibly can be they cannot very well be worse, and it is therefore probable that, before long, we may perceive some slight amelioration of the symptoms. Let us hope this will take place, or it may be necessary to hang a red cross worked in Berlin wool upon the door of every house infected with the malady. We are aware that, like turning an electrifying machine, it is an easy performance, producing a great effect; but still, as one of the harsher sex, we wish to impress the young ladies with a proper notion of the dread with which young gentlemen look upon every species of fancy work. We know that flirtations may be delightfully carried on, whilst seated behind a twenty-inch square of canvass strained upon a frame almost to what scientific people term "a solution of continuity," or admiring the gradual progress of a Louis Quatorze scroll—but flirtations are like squibs without bangs, or wet rockets; a great deal of flourish ending in nothing but disappointment. We also know that as the lady bends down to inspect her work more minutely, or count the squares, the swan-like curve of her neck appears to the greatest advantage, and that her silken and perfumed ringlets are thrown into most exquisite contrast

with the rough worsted they traverse, like a spring zephyr passing over a furze field. But silken ringlets are very delicate fetters to bind down in permanent security so wild and uncertain a prisoner as the heart; if, indeed, the heart can be a prisoner.

To speak in matter-of-fact terms, it is plainly evident that to meet the depressed state of affairs in general, and matrimony in particular, useful wives are now preferred to astonishing ones. Not that we wish to cry down accomplishments—far from it; for when combined with real utility, they are all-potent in attraction. The fair creature who can superintend the manufacture of negus and lemonade for her company, “behind the scenes,” and then come calmly into the drawing-room, and sing the finale to *La Sonnambula* whilst they are drinking it, to carry on time and help out the evening, is a treasure beyond all price. We will allow her, possessing these excellences, to indulge occasionally in a small German pattern, by way of recreation. Let her not, however, be too much enthralled by its allurements, but ever keep in mind, that in point of real domestic economy, it is better to be able to sew on a button properly, than embroider all the sleeping dogs, flying pheasants, and smoking Musselmans that ever were produced. We admit that the darning of stockings is by no means a romantic occupation—at least, we never find it as such in the old poets—but experience proves it to be an exceedingly useful one, and worthy of consideration in all properly conducted establishments.

And, finally, for the benefit of patriots and politicians, to show how much in reality all theories of general amelioration eventually yield to personal benefit, we beg to inform our lady readers, that being an author, in the same

situation as Dr. Johnson when he first came to town, "miserably poor," and withal, most grateful for any assistance, we may, perhaps, be pardoned for throwing out the hint—in the most delicate manner possible—that a trifle of Berlin work, in the cause of charity, cannot be misapplied,—that our present slippers exhibit unequivocal symptoms of rapid and inevitable decay, and, that we are not at all particular as to pattern.*



* Our concert-going friends will perceive that the above article furnished the talented *buffo* singer, Mr. John Parry, with his song of "Berlin Wool."

THE LAUDANUM PATIENT.

MR. CRIPPS was one of the best-tempered men at the hospital, wherein he filled the post of house-surgeon, always ready for a piece of fun when there was anything going on; and yet possessing sufficient tact and good sense to keep quiet when he thought it necessary for the support of the true dignity of his character. He was a universal favourite with all classes, both patients, surgeons, and pupils; for he was kind to the first, attentive to the second, and never refused to join in the amusements of the third, when not interfering with his own duties. He was, in fact, what every medical student ought to be. Not on the one side a careless idler, who sneered at everything connected with study, and thought the chief happiness the world could give was to be found in a glass of brandy and water. Nor was he, on the other, one of those intense *potterers* who haunt the hospitals year after year, cringing to the officers, and thinking themselves above the pupils, with the sole hope of being at some very distant period elected assistant-surgeon—an aspiration which is never gratified. But he, Mr. Cripps, combined the best qualities of the two, and so kept very friendly with all. You could seldom go into his room without finding one or two of the choicest men in the medical school lolling about upon his chairs, and taking everlasting lunches; indeed, his quarters appeared a perpetual scene of bread, cheese, and half-and-half, which were mingled upon the table in admirable confusion with scalpels, stethoscopes, bones, and manuals of surgery and anatomy.

Mr. Cripps' rooms—or rather his room, for the bed-chamber was only a long, narrow, accidental appendix to his

sitting apartment—were on the first-floor of the hospital, and in the immediate vicinity of two of the wards. A strong smell of stale tobacco pervaded the interior; and, indeed, it would have been much stronger had there been anything to retain it. But the carpet was so worn that it appeared to have been turned the wrong side upwards; and the pair of dingy window curtains had, in all probability been hanging there ever since the hospital was first chartered, and now assumed a series of tints, varying in their colour from dirty buff to dull red.

The furniture was admirably in keeping with the chamber, being dark with age, and of a fashion unknown in the memory of the oldest second-hand broker in London. The chairs mostly suffered from rickets, and the sofa was particularly unsteady, in consequence of an unreduced dislocation of one of its four hip-joints, which was gradually wearing away a new socket for itself in a corner of the squab that formed its seat. There was an ancient bureau, in which Cripps kept his books; but the piece of furniture had lost its turned legs, which were supposed to have mortified at a period lost in antiquity; and now it stood by being propped up against the ledge of the wainscot behind, and was in consequence christened by Mr. Cripps his “upholsterous biped.” One of its doors suffered from paralysis of the hinges: and the other had an artificial joint, ingeniously made from an old bent probe, which allowed it to close and open with tolerable facility. The windows commanded a fine view of the hospital garden, with its perambulating patients, consisting of convalescent amputations, ameliorated squints, recovered operations for club feet, and last stages but one of œdema, who were perpetually crawling up and down its formal walks, and over the parallelogram of hard,

black earth, which was by courtesy denominated the grass-plot. This area was bounded by the backs of the houses in the adjacent streets; all of whose occupants evinced indomitable perseverance in eternally washing their things at home, and then displaying them upon poles from their windows, where they fluttered all day long. By much observation, Mr. Cripps had become acquainted with a great deal of the domestic economy practised by his neighbours, through these signals. He knew perfectly when to look out for the appearance of the patchwork quilt, on the third-floor of No. 12; and he discovered that the back attic of No. 7 possessed two pair of sheets, which were washed in turns, being recognised by sundry patches and repairs.

He was sitting one morning in the surgery, waiting for some out-door patients to arrive, when the door opened, and Mr. Blake, a pupil of the hospital, having first thrust in a small portion of his head to see that the coast was clear, propelled the rest of his body after it, and saluted Cripps with a wink of the right eye, intended to express the compliments of the morning.

"What's the news, Cripps?" was the first question.

"Little enough from me," returned his friend. "My opinion of a house-surgeon is, that he's two degrees worse off than a prisoner in the Queen's Bench."

"Well, you have not much longer to stay," replied Blake, seating himself at the table, and playing with some tooth instruments. "What a room of torture this is!" he continued, after a momentary gaze around the surgery, and at the different objects hanging about.

There certainly was a great display of all kinds of articles, that any one skilled in the art of ingeniously tormenting would have delighted to contemplate. Gags

for obstinate poison-takers; keys, elevators, forceps, and punches for the odontalgists; caustic for touching up refractory excrescences; long savage-looking bistouries; deeply-insinuating probes and scalpels; with knives, lancets, and directors of every size and capacity.

"There only wants one thing to render all this apparatus perfect, said Blake, as he looked round him.

"And what's that?" asked Mr. Cripps.

"A twitch for the noses," replied Blake.

"I don't quite know what you mean."

"A twitch," returned Blake, "is a piece of broomstick with a string loop at the end, that you put over colts' noses, and screw up tight when they run rusty at being singed, or put into harness. You would find it a capital remedy for epistaxis."

"I don't doubt it," answered Cripps; "indeed, I think it would be a valuable addition to surgery. By the way, I've formed a beautiful diagnosis lately."

"What about?" asked Blake.

"Between various accidents," returned the house-surgeon. "For instance, broken legs always come on a shutter; fractured ribs in a patent cab; and dislocated shoulders usually walk."

"And what good does that do you?"

"Oh, nothing particular—only if you see a casualty coming, you know what it is, and what to get ready."

"Then you had better be looking after your apparatus now," said Blake, "for here's an accident coming in."

In confirmation of his statement, a crowd of dirty little boys, surrounding a group of three persons, the middle one of whom was being supported by the other two, crossed the court of the hospital, and came up to the surgery. As the nurse opened the door to admit them,

the whole posse pressed forwards to obtain entrance with the patient; and the place would have been certainly carried by storm had not Blake gone to the assistance of the nurse, and vigorously repelled the assailants with a straw *junk*—an instrument used in the treatment of fractures, and which he liberally dealt about the heads of the intruders.

“Now, then, missus,—what is it?” asked Cripps, when Blake had succeeded in closing the door and bolting it, addressing himself to a woman who had come in with the patient.

“He’s pisened hisself with lodnum!” was the reply. Whereupon she began to moan after the most approved manner of poor people in a dilemma, thinking that she should have lived to have seen the day, and recollecting it was only last night he was saying, he meant to join the blessed Temperance.

“When did he take it?” asked Cripps, feeling in his waistcoat pocket for the key of his stomach-pump.

“Why, docthor,” rejoined the woman, “last Januay twelvemonth——”

“When?” interrupted Blake, with some astonishment.

“Last Januay twelvemonth,” continued the woman, “there was a benefit society formed at the Corner Pin public-house, and the members has some ’scursions on board the steamboats——”

“My good woman,” said Cripps; “I asked you when he took it;—can’t you give me a simple answer?”

“I don’t know, I don’t know!” cried the woman, wringing the corner of her apron, as if she laboured under a belief that it was wet. “All I can tell is, I’d been into Mrs. Watts’ to help her wash, and when I come back the room was locked, and I looked through the keyhole, and

there he was a sitting in an arm-chair with his hands hanging down just like a corpse. Oh, dear! oh, dear! what shall I do?"

"What makes you think he has taken laudanum?" asked Blake.

"I found this bottle on the floor," said the woman, producing an irregularly-shaped green phial with letters blown on it, and labelled "~~Laudanum—Poison.~~"

"I don't think that's opium," said Blake, smelling the bottle; "its more like lacquer for brass work."

"He's evidently in a state of coma," replied Cripps; "and his breathing is anything but what I should like mine to be. Well, there's only one plan—I suppose I had better perform a solo on the stomach-pump."

"And then we'll give him a promenade without the concert, in the garden, to keep him awake," added Blake. "Get a basin, Surgery, and some warm water."

"I think he's been sitting in the sun a little too much," observed the nurse addressed as "Surgery," with a knowing assent, as she tilted the kettle, implying by that delicate metaphor that the man was drunk.

The stomach-pump was soon in action, and the result convinced the students that there was a great deal more gin than laudanum in what the patient had taken. At the conclusion of the performance the man appeared a little relieved. He opened his eyes, rolled them heavily about, gave a sulky grunt, and tried to raise himself from the chair.

"Do you think he'll recover, docthor?" asked the woman.

"I think so," said Cripps; "but he will require great care. Now, we must mind that he does not go to sleep again; and for that purpose he must be walked gently round the garden."

"You can stay here until we return," said Blake to the woman. And then supporting the patient with Cripps' aid, they led him into the garden.

"How are you, old fireworks?" asked Blake, when they got out of earshot.

"I'm the Marquis of Herne Bay, there and back; and Prince George of Peckham and Camberwell," growled the man, in the true accents of intoxication.

"Yes, yes! we know all that," said Blake. "Don't you think a little dash of Preissnitz would do him good, Cripps?"

"I should say so, decidedly," replied the house-surgeon; "and if I have preference, it should be fresh from the pump."

Fortunately for their good intentions, there was a pump in the garden, principally used for the purpose of irrigating the esculent vegetables which grew there for the consumption of the matron, secretary, and house-apothecary; as well as for strengthening weak ligaments, and relaxed joints by its bracing stream. Towards this point Blake and Cripps conducted their patient, and seating him opposite to it, upon the ground, propped up by the garden-roller, the first named gentleman worked at the handle, whilst the latter interrupted the stream with his hand, jerking it copiously into the face of their victim, until he was wet through and through.

"Now, I think, we had better dry him," said Blake, when they had persevered in this innocent recreation for about five minutes. Upon which—in spite of the struggles and remonstrances of the man, who having been in reality only dead-drunk, was coming to his senses again very quickly—Cripps and his companion took him by the

arms, and ran him round and round the garden, until nearly every bit of breath was out of his body; and they themselves quite overcome with fatigue.

"Will you ever do it again?" asked Cripps, with as serious a face as he could command.

"Never, no more, s'help me eversomuch," was the answer. "I'll be a teetotaller,—If I don't I am——"

"Hush!" cried Blake gravely. "Recollect how you have been snatched from the jaws of death by our united efforts. How came you to get drunk so early in the morning?"

"It's all along of the 'scursion as I was steward for," replied the man. "I had the grog to keep and couldn't help it."

"And how did you come by this bottle?" asked Cripps, taking the laudanum phial from his pocket.

"I keeps lacquer in it," was the answer; "I'm a gilder by trade."

"I said it was!" cried Blake, quite delighted at his prognosis; "I knew it all the while."

"How the deuce did you know what lacquer was?" asked Cripps.

"I was with a dentist once," replied Blake; "and we used it to set off the brass things that he kept in a little case on his street-door post, and made the people believe were gold."

The man being pronounced recovered, was now led back to the surgery. He departed in a short time with the woman, accompanied by the cheers of such little boys as had waited outside the whole time, and looking very pale and repentant. It seems, however, that the ordeal he had undergone was not without its effect; for, three days after-

wards, Blake saw him with a high clean shirt-collar, and a blue bow on his hat, entering the Temperance Coffee House, which was close to the hospital.

A USEFUL RECEIPT.

HOW TO CURE LOVE.



AKE three evening parties a-week, where you are not likely to fall in with the object of your affection; a few flirtations with the finest dark eyes you can procure, in the conservatory, after supper; six long waltzes with as many pretty girls, and taking them down for ice afterwards; four ballads nicely sung, without making faces, by the same number of beauties in the intervals of the quadrilles; a few visits to the Opera (if you have a box and *one* agreeable companion, *tant mieux*) when Fanny Elssler dances the Cracovienne or the Cachucha, in order [that you may dream of her afterwards. N.B. The ground tier to be selected, if you can get it. Think, at the same time, that Ellen's features are more regular; that Harriet sings much better; that Emily's figure is more perfect; that Bessy's teeth and hands are much whiter; that Louisa has more intellect and mind; and that Mary's connexions are far more desirable. If all this fail, your case is desperate indeed, and you must try change of air, and a residence at Paris, Rome, or Venice during the Carnival.

MR. PERCIVAL JENKS, AND THE BALLET GIRL.



THE ballet had concluded; the lustres of the chandeliers had ceased to vibrate with the last plaudits; and the people in the dress circle, who commenced getting up and looking after their gloves and boas when the blue fire of the last scene was ignited by the man with the lucifer-matches behind the wings, had already gained the lobby. The fall of the drop-curtain had dispelled the charm. The bright eyes of the *coryphées* were veiled, and the last glimpse of their satin-shod and twinkling feet had been snatched away; in fact, sylphs had yielded to every day mortals, and the Danube's flowery banks to Brydges Street and Vinegar Yard; when Mr. Percival Jenks elbowed his way out of the pit, and marched, with excited feelings and romantic thoughts, in the direction of the Strand.

We wish we could tell what Mr. Percival Jenks was; but *that* was never known to a soul except his employer—not even to the landlady of the tenement, in whose apartments he occupied a second-floor back bed-room. The good lady knew he was “something in a house in the city;” but her information extended no further. What were his favourite pursuits, however, and his usual habits—his instinctive economy, we were about to say, in com-

pliance with the scientific taste of the age—was less occult. In winter he led a chrysalis kind of life—not exactly buried in dirt, with his arms and legs tucked up against his ribs, but wrapped up within himself, as it were, (for his duffel dressing-gown, which he delighted to indulge in when at home, was his own epitome,) and seldom stirring out beyond his usual compulsory attendance at his situation, except on an occasional pantomimical excursion, or shilling's-worth of harmony and “hot with” at the Eagle. But, at the first approach of spring, Mr. Percival Jenks followed up his entomological analogy, and burst forth into light and life, in company with everything else around him, from the black-laden aspirants to vegetation in the squares, to the solitary hyacinth that bloomed from a cracked water-caraffe on his mantelpiece. The first gleam of a sunny afternoon was celebrated by the investment of a certain sum in a bottle of reviver, for the improvement of his frock-coat; and having well-humoured his hat with a wet brush, and inked the edges, carefully pasting pieces of card inside, to act as splints to the fractured tissues of the crown, he washed his silk gloves, bought a light-blue figured satin stock, allowed his hair to grow somewhat longer than ordinary, and studiously dressing himself every day on his return from the city, would then turn out in all the pride of his appearance, and believe himself a man about town.

It was coming from Drury Lane Theatre that we first presented him to the reader; and, like Romeo, we introduced him sighing and in love, for his heart had been that night suddenly taken by storm. The third ballet-girl from the left-hand stage-box, with the golden belt and green wreath, in the *Pas des Guirlandes*, or lyres, or umbrellas, or something of the kind, had enslaved his



susceptible affections. He mechanically wandered to the Cider Cellars, and bespoke his supper; but the beautiful *danseuse* still haunted him, and the harmony of that convivial resort of play-goers fell unheeded on his ear. He thought of nothing but *her*. Now her image dwindled to fairy dimensions, stood poised on the top of his roast potatoe; now she laughingly skimmed the frothy surface of his pint of stout, and anon rose playfully bewitching amidst the smoke of his cigar.

When a man is at all in love, a glass of brandy-and-water wonderfully deepens his affections, and throws a romantic halo round the beloved object. Match-making people who give evening parties know this axiom well; or

they would not be so lavish of their iced punch and champagne, to whose combined influence so many proposals are in debt. *Par conséquence*, Mr. Jenks, having slightly indulged, arrived at home in a state bordering on delirium, his thoughts being wildly thrown about in his brain; but amidst the confusion of ideas the ballet-girl was still floating uppermost, like a nut tossed about in the gutter of Botolph Lane. The lodgers who resided in the same house were alarmed at the frequent sounds of ten fantastic toes falling anything but lightly on the floor of Mr. Jenks's room for half an hour after he went up stairs with his candle; and one of those, who had the curiosity to look through the keyhole of his room, reported that he saw Percival in an aerial ballet-dress, composed of a red pocket-handkerchief girding his blue-striped night-shirt round the waist, throwing himself into strange pantomimic attitudes before the looking-glass, chiefly expressive of eternal love, which he several times performed in the most approved fashion, by rapping his chest violently and rapidly with his right hand, and then raising it towards the skies, or, rather, where they were supposed to be. At last he got tired, and putting out his candle bounded into bed, after missing his aim and springing against the post; for mankind had not yet arrived at the luxury of a self-extinguisher—a dreadful little instrument, that embraces the wick with a *pop!* which frightens you to death for the first three months you use it. But even in the dark his thoughts still wandered to the beautiful dancer, and he pictured her, all smiles and attitudes, hovering about his French bed, and dancing a *pas seul* upon the washhand-stand, until he went to sleep, when he dreamt he was a young Arcadian bacchanal, with roses in his hair, receiving wine from his goddess, who stood on the toe of one foot as

she poured it out, while she flung the other several inches higher than her own head.

He awoke in the morning from his blissful slumbers feverish and unsettled. The head clerk at his "house in the city" discovered him drawing little opera-dancers all over his blotting-paper, and his accounts were so very unsatisfactory that he was obliged to stay two hours after time to make them up. At half-price, nevertheless, he was at the play again; his whole existence centered in an airy compound of clear muslin and white satin that was twirling about the stage. The play-bill afforded him no clue to her name, or he would have called for her when the curtain fell. In vain he looked upon the long list of Misses Farebrother, Marshall, Platt, Taylor, A. Kendall, Reekie, and company. These he knew, but the other's appellation still remained a mystery. He went again the next night, and the next, and the next. But at length he began to find his exchequer would not stand this continued run of dissipation. The pit had already given up to the two-shilling gallery, and the two-shilling gallery in turn had yielded to the celestial portion of the house above it. Mr. Percival Jenks had much internal combating before he could descend to this elevation, if we may express the change thus paradoxically; but love overcame all his other senses. As the money fell short, even this was given up, and he had now no other alternative but to wait at the stage-door for the chance of seeing the lady of his heart.

Here, then, for several nights did he take his stand amongst the crowd of shabby idlers who loiter about the avenues of a theatre. How anxiously he counted out the house! First came the orchestra, then the peasants and villagers, then the second-rate actors, next the stars, and and finally the scene-shifters; but no vision of the ballet-

girl greeted his vision. Sometimes he imagined that such an ærial creature disdained the earth, and evaporated through the chandelier, or left the house by some equally strange manoeuvre; so fair a creation could never belong to the faded cloaks and drabby bonnets that issued from the theatrical sanctum.

For many nights did Mr. Jenks post himself at the stage-door, in painful expectation of meeting the loved object; and as many times was he disappointed. Sometimes he almost inclined himself to believe that the whole race of ballet-girls were not mortal; in fact, that they were constituted of the essential particles of gas, music, and delusion, that floated about the playhouse (in the same manner as the old philosophers described the production of blight and fire-flies), dissolving into thin air once more, when the performance had concluded. At all events, it was an extremely difficult creed to reconcile himself to, that the same ærial beings who had been riding on wicker butterflies, flying on muslin clouds, or floating in baths of canvass stretched on wooden frames, in the midst of all the dazzling excitement of a theatre, could go quietly home to sup off bread and cheese, or perhaps onions, or baked sheep's heads. No, no, it was not likely; they must live, he thought, on the petals of flowers, and drink dew—pure, ethereal mountain dew. Perhaps they did!

One night, after waiting at his accustomed post with his usual want of success, Jenks turned by chance into a neighbouring house for a bottle of ginger-beer, to allay his thirsty and agitated excitement. It was a theatrical tavern—a house of call for minor actors, where standard-bearers, mobs, pantomime shopkeepers, imps, and banditti, could always be engaged on the shortest notice. Here congregated those facetious individuals who tumble down

on the slide which the clown has made with a pat of butter: here also were attendant demons to be found, warranted not to cough, or be choked, in the middle of the most dense fumes from the tray of red fire ever ignited, as they came up the trap; and here also might be met Chinese Brothers, Parisian Incomprehensibles, Saltimbanques of Syria, Athenian Athletæ, Herculean Egyptians, Bounding Bedouins—in fine, wonderful people from every



corner of the earth, and whose most incredible talent, after all, was the perfect knowledge they had acquired of English customs and language.

The bar and parlour of this house were in perfect keeping with its frequenters. The walls were adorned with por-

traits of every actor that had ever lived, in every character that he ever performed ; and there were several pictures of the same actors in two or three different characters, which proved how admirably the performer could change the entire contour of his features together with his costume. Over the fire-place were two elegant chimney ornaments, being representations of Mr. Someone as El Hyder, and Mrs. Somebody else as Joan of Arc, mounted upon paste-board, and glittering with stamped tinsel and gold dots. There had been a companion to the above in the shape of Mrs. Honey as Apollo ; but the figure first got very rickety about the ankles, and at last, in spite of the match glued on behind, broke off altogether, leaving only a pair of blue boots attached to the ground-piece. The very placards of the prices of various liquors retailed were theatrical. Clowns and pantaloons were fighting with bottles of ginger beer at "3d. a bottle;" harlequins supported tablets inscribed with advice to "try our Kennet Ale at sixpence;" and Paul Prys, Jim Crows, and Pusses in Boots, abounded on all sides, lending their aid to vaunt the superiority of the different wines or spirits whose unparalleled cheapness they recorded. The whole interior, in fact, bore the resemblance to a pantomime scene, and you would not have been much taken by surprise if with a touch of the magic wand the whole of the walls and fixtures would have turned inside out, or flapped up and down, changing into the Fairy Palace of the Star of Diamonds, or some other of the regions of delight that conclude our Christmas entertainments. Where those joyous realms are situated, we know not—we are only introduced to their glittering localities once a-year; and then, with too painful a resemblance to the momentary flashes of happiness which sometimes are allowed to burst upon our own dull world,

they are snatched away from our sight, leaving all commonplace and life-like as before.

When Mr. Jenks entered the house, a knot of shabby-looking men were collected round the bar, discussing with much enthusiasm the various matters of temporary interest connected with the different theatres. By degrees our hero joined the circle; he possessed a slight acquaintance with the subject of their conversation—sufficient, at all events, to enable him to give an occasional opinion—and he gradually entered into their arguments; nor was he long in discovering that two of the party were members of the Drury Lane Company. The outlay of sixpence in a pot of the aforesaid “Kennet Ale” procured him an additional degree of respect and a firmer footing in their society; and, before long, one of them had invited Mr. Jenks to accompany him behind the scenes the next night, on condition that he would not object to appear on the stage.

“Will it not be intruding?” asked Percival, modestly.

“By no means, Sir,” returned the man. “The ballet is a heavy piece, and an additional supernumerary will be an advantage rather than otherwise. Should you like to be a vassal or a nobility?”

Percival debated the question in his own mind for an instant. He, however, at last, inclined to the aristocracy, and expressed his determination to become “a nobility,” as his new friend had termed it. The man accordingly appointed a rendezvous for six o'clock the next evening; and Mr. Jenks retired home, full of anticipated happiness, and contemplating the prospect of an introduction to the beloved object.

The next day wore sluggishly away, and a quarter of an hour before the appointed time Percival found himself at the theatrical tavern, in a mingled state of excitement, ex-

pectation, and XX ale—a small quantity of which he had imbibed to give him the confidence necessary for his “first appearance upon any stage.” His new acquaintance was not long before he joined him, and they walked together in the direction of the stage-door of the theatre, Mr. Jenks not having a perfectly distinct idea of whether he was progressing forwards upon his head or his heels.

They entered the door of the sanctum of the playhouse—the mysterious and spell-girt *coulisses*—and threaded their way through various narrow and intricate passages; now stumbling up, and anon tumbling down, small flights of stairs, and then falling over properties, ropes, spars, and set pieces, which were strewn or crowded in all directions. The walls were rough and unplastered, or covered with thin coats of dirty whitewash; jets of flaring gas burst out at short intervals; and people were constantly hurrying backwards and forwards, pushing Mr. Jenks about in every direction, and requiring him to control his bewildered ideas to the personal care of himself—at least, as far as he was able to do so.

After passing through a part of the theatre appropriated to all sorts of odd frameworks and contrivances for some display—amongst which he recognised various old well-known stone crosses, wheels for water-mills, and flowery banks and arbours, as well as ruined columns, fortified gateways, and gothic arches, made from wood and canvass, by a species of theatrical petrification, a sudden turn brought him unexpectedly upon the stage, immediately behind the enormous curtain, whose mighty expanse was hanging in sullen grandeur, until the three knocks of the prompter should arouse its attendant machinery.

And this, then, was the stage of Old Drury! This large sloping floor of worn and dirty boards, intersected

by rough grooves and slides, and perforated by traps and falling platforms at every step—this area of dust, chalk, splinters, stains, and protruding rails and pegs—was the scene of those countless wonders he had so often gazed upon, when, from the two-shilling gallery, its surface appeared clean, smooth, and regular, as the floors of Windsor Castle! But above all, this was the spot hallowed by the presence of the loved object—he could almost trace the particular board on which her tiny foot descended after one of her aerial bounds. And she would be there again to-night. He should see her—breathe the same air that she did (and a delightful atmosphere of gas, brimstone, oil, and wet size it was, only besides being blind, Love occasionally wants some other of the senses); above all he might perhaps speak to her!

By degrees he became sensible of the buzz of the audience, broken by the intervening curtain into a low continued murmur. The orchestra, too, began to tune. First, a solitary violin, like the early chirp of a restless sparrow, or what writers of more poetical invention would call the first morning carol of the bird of the greenwood, gave the note. This provoked other sounds—the French-horn, who had not yet entered the orchestra, indulged in some flourishes of his own whilst yet under the stage; the trumpet took his instrument to pieces, and blew through each bit separately; the drum performed some manœuvres with the pieces of cord that were stretched along the side, in the self-opiniated idea that a drum was capable of being tuned; and the triangle, who had not much to arrange, first looked all round the house, and then nodded, with a patronizing air, to a friend whom he recognized in the front row of the pit.

At last, the overture commenced, and the groups took

their respective stations upon the stage, for the first scene of *The Siege of Rochelle*. Mr. Jenks remarked, with some expressions of naïve astonishment, that the helmets of the soldiers were not of real steel, and that the peasantesses on the right were working without needles. He moreover observed, that they were about to "drink to Victory" in copious libations of air, which, philosophically considered, was the only fluid that filled the cups and flagons. He would have indulged in more minute discoveries, had not his friend told him, that the stage must be cleared of all extraneous characters, for the opening chorus; whereupon, he retired behind the wings, first receiving strict injunctions not to go beyond a certain line, because if he did, they could see him from the audience part of the house; and the generality of playgoers were getting so very acute in their ideas of dress, that they knew brown tail coats and drab trowsers were not the costumes worn at Rochelle at the period of the siege.

The first act passed away, and Mr. Jenks had seen nothing of his goddess. At this period, his theatrical Mentor summoned him to the gentlemen's dressing-room, in order that his costume might be provided for the ballet. As there was no dress laid out for him, he followed his friend up-stairs to the wardrobe; a long room lined with presses, and provided with large counters, on which were deposited all sorts of tunics, trunks, tights, and tinselled tabards and trimmings. Here he was soon provided with a suit of extraordinary splendour of appearance (from the house); and taking it under his arm, he retraced his steps to the dressing-room, and contrived, by some means or another, to get into it, although it certainly cut him a little under the arm, and was not so long in the waist as it might have been. His friend applied a little coarse

rouge to his cheeks with a hare's foot; and having turned him round two or three times, as if he was playing at blindman's-buff, without a bandage, declared him perfectly in order to take his place in the groups as a nobility.

With a palpitating heart, Mr. Jenks allowed himself to be led on to the stage, and not without some misgivings did he listen to the directions for his subsequent demeanour. At length the awful moment arrived. The visitors of the Baron had to make their appearance, and, sticking close to his friend, he plunged from behind the side-scene into the full blaze of the lamps and sight of the audience. For an instant he saw nothing but an indistinct and blinding glare, amidst which the foot-lamps appeared to be performing a ballet of their own. But, by degrees, the immense *salle* and its occupants became apparent, forming a vast amphitheatre of heads on each side, which gradually vanished in the distant elevations of the gallery. Between him and the audience, various delicate forms, all with their backs towards him, were twirling and bounding over the stage, and these instantaneously riveted his sight. Yes—there, at the well-known spot, was the equally familiar golden belt and green wreath, flinging their attendant pair of arms joyously in the air, or linking them in a beauteous circle with their fair companions.

"Bow, bow," said his friend, as the dance concluded, and applause rang through the house.

Mr. Jenks inferred it was to the audience he should make the salute, and accordingly he bent low towards them.

"Pshaw!" remarked his friend, spinning him forcibly round; "You must bow to the Baron—he is supposed to give the feast."

And scarcely knowing what he did, Mr. Jenks repeated his inclination to the Baron, after everybody had finished. The curtain at this moment descended for the conclusion of the first act, and Percival, before it had half fallen, hastened towards the spot just occupied by the loved object. As the heavy roller of the drop-scene touched the ground he was at her side.

Lovers are an extraordinary set of people. When they are absent from the adored object, they think of nothing else: they indulge in long imaginary conversations, and receive all sorts of delightful ideal replies in return: and yet the minute they come into contact (provided of course that they are not regularly engaged, which diminishes a great deal of their romance), they stand sidling about, as silent as a back street on a wet Sunday, hazarding a few very commonplace remarks; and directly they have parted, loading themselves with self-reproaches for what they might have said. Thus it proved with Mr. Percival Jenks. The instant that he found himself near the idol of his affections—so near that the silver-bound flounce of her white muslin dress touched his long red stockings—he appeared deprived of utterance, and remained in one fixed position, gazing very devotedly at the green wreath. And he was slightly annoyed at one circumstance: the lady, on her side, took no notice of him; although he was sure she must often have observed him applaud her amongst the ten or twelve hundred other auditors. She never even turned her eyes towards them, but appeared to be directing all her attention to the performance of certain positions and attitudes, with no other object that he could perceive than the amusement of a tipsy scene-shifter, who was half asleep inside the Sonnambula mill-wheel. He thought upon a dozen of various methods

to commence a dialogue with her, and abandoned them all in turn ; some being too reserved, others too familiar, and the rest incapable of producing the impression he wished to make at first starting. At last, he thought he would place himself directly opposite to her, and smile very blandly.

" Now, sir, I'll trouble you to move," said another scene-shifter, who was carrying a side-scene for the next act, which looked to Percival like a large clothes-horse covered with dirty canvas, and to the audience like the massy stone buttress of a prison.

This was very annoying, for Mr. Jenks had that instant attracted the attention of the *danseuse*—at least he thought he had. Before he could recover his position, the whole troop of young ladies went chattering and laughing up a steep flight of stairs to their dressing-rooms, because the peasant girls of one scene had to go on as water-nymphs in another, and a consequent change of apparel was requisite. Like the brave old oak, Percival found himself " left in his pride alone," and he retreated in melancholy and disappointed humour to join his friend, and receive instructions as to what he was to do next when the act began.

In a short time, the curtain once more rose upon the wonders of the ballet, and the nymphs of the Danube again appeared upon the stage. Percival could still distinguish the form of his beloved one amidst the throng of dancers ; and when the gentleman in white tights ran about amongst the water-sprites as if in search of somebody, first catching hold of one and then of the other, and occasionally seizing Percival's adored one, he thought what a happy person the gentleman in such a case must be. All this time he was inventing a fine speech to make

to the young lady when he had an opportunity of once more addressing her; and at last he composed one which he thought the *beau idéal* of gallantry. But, throughout the performance he never could contrive to get near her. When he was off the stage, the loved object was, in company with the other attendant sprites, delighting the audience close up to the front lamps; and yet, whenever he was on the scene, bowing to the Baron, he could see the fair one spinning and bounding about in the side-scenes like a top that had taken too much. Now she was playfully endeavouring to place her sandal on the top of a scene-shifter's head; now she was jumping over the rain,



or seeing how high she could touch the thunder; and now—could it really be, that she was drinking something out of a pint pot! No! impossible; she was merely practising how she should hold the silver goblet in a future scene. At least this was the object of the performance that Percival, in the kindness of affection, ascribed to her. Whether he was right or not, we will not pretend to say.

At last the ballet concluded, and everybody that had been concerned in it retired to divest themselves of their gaudy apparel, and once more descend to the costume of common mortals. In company with the others, Percival retreated to the dressing-room, and hurriedly proceeded to skin off—for they were very tight—his garments of nobility, in the hope that he might gain the stage-door before the lady of his heart left. But again his evil genius was against him. The ~~dance~~ had promised to execute a *pas seul* that evening for the benefit of a friend at a musical tavern in the neighbourhood, where there was a sixpenny concert every night, and accordingly had left the theatre in a patent cab the instant the curtain fell. Ignorant of this, Mr. Jenks waited everybody out of the house, until the watchman himself came to close the door; then he tore himself away, having first made an appointment with his new friend to attend the rehearsal the next morning, when, if he got through his duties tolerably well, an indistinct hint was held out of twelve shillings a-week salary, to be paid by instalments, when he could get them.

Our ideas of external objects, good or bad, are intimately connected with the frame of mind we chance to be in when we notice them. Percival was in a very ill-humour, and he allowed it to throw a gloomy mantle over everything that came in his way. What business had the people with ham sandwiches and boiled feet to bother him

with their importunities to purchase! The very baked-potato men followed him with their rubbish, and the cabmen appeared more than ever obtrusively inquisitive, interrupting his chain of thoughts every minute with their hails. When he got home, he found fault with the key-hole of the street-door: next he quarrelled with every bolt in succession, as he fastened it after him, finishing by bestowing a look of profound contempt upon the chain; and when he reached his bedroom he was so displeased with the window-blinds, bed-furniture, looking-glass, and snuffers, that it is a wonder how he had contrived to live there so long under such an accumulation of domestic grievances. Perhaps the looking-glass was most deserving of his ire. It was a swing one, and, like all its species, persisted obstinately in tumbling forwards the instant you went to look in it. Once it could be fixed by turning round the knobs at the side, but that was at a period long passed away; and now the only plan to ensure its services was to wedge it immovably with the handle of the hair-brush against one of its pillars. Having accomplished this, Mr. Jenks proceeded to divest himself of the rouge that still adorned his cheeks; and then getting into bed, fairly moped himself to sleep, when he dreamed that all his fairest wishes were accomplished—a melancholy delusion that haunts our slumbers whenever the really desired object is most remote from being fulfilled, as if the painful reality of waking to gloom and sorrow was meant to prove how little worth are the wanderings of fancy and imagination against the hard truths which life is constantly teaching us.

His excuse for absence from his "house in the city" the next morning was easily anticipated. And a glorious one it was—one that has put off more parties than any

other, where the expense began to frighten the givers; one that has declined more invitations than any other, where the society was not too much admired; one that has thrown up unwelcome visits, broken unpleasant appointments, shirked long-winded intruders; in fact, one that has served everybody at all times—the universal, escapeless, convenient *influenza*. This amiable *malady* answered every purpose Mr. Jenks desired. His employer, who expected some people for money, was laid up with the same complaint, and therefore he could not grumble at his clerk for having it. Besides, he had been at a party the night before, where the hostess had met with fifty refusals that morning. It is true, that the children in the house had been ill with the scarlet fever since the invitations first went out and were accepted, but this could not have been the reason. It certainly was very generally prevalent indeed. Accordingly, Percival took unto himself a holiday; and, punctual to his agreement, met his theatrical friend as he had appointed, when they both went together to the rehearsal.

If there is a truly forlorn and deplorable spectacle in the world, next to a bachelor's room the morning after a convivial party, it is the interior of a theatre by daylight; when the cold light streams in from numerous small windows and apertures over the galleries and chandeliers, revealing the tawdry decorations of the house in all their poverty. And very cheerless indeed did the playhouse look when Percival entered; the whole of its vast area of pit, boxes, and gallery being totally deserted, except by a few remote and indistinct forms, who were knocking brooms about amongst the benches, and sweeping up all the orange-peel, nut-shells, torn play-bills, and odd gloves, that the audience of the preceding evening had left behind

them. The gentlemen of the orchestra were performing some pieces of music that awakened loud echoes in the comparatively empty building, and small knots of ill-dressed people, the majority of whom appeared to revel in second-hand editions of cast-off fashions, were collected about in different situations, hurriedly gabbling over the dialogue which was to delight the evening's audience. At one of the wings, a crowd of noisy girls had collected, who appeared to set little value upon the frequent and authoritative commands for silence that were launched against them. It was amongst these Percival made sure of finding his fair one; and if one voice more soft, one laugh more silvery, than the others, rose above the general clatter, he made sure it was hers. He would have gone over to them; but not knowing how far stage etiquette allowed such a proceeding during a rehearsal, he kept in his place, and contented himself by putting a few interrogatories to his companion.

"Do you know the young lady," he inquired, "who dances in the ballet, with a green wreath round her head?"

"And a gilt belt round her waist?" asked the friend in turn.

"The same. Who is she?" eagerly demanded Percival.

"Oh—its Miss—Miss—I shall forget my own name next."

Percival was about to suggest *Rosière*, *Celeste*, *Amadée*, and other pretty cognomens, when his companion caught the name, and exclaimed,

"Miss Jukes. I thought I should recollect it."

The name certainly was not what Percival had expected: still, what was in a name?—"Jenks" was not very poetical, and the other was something like it.

"Could you favour me with an introduction to her?" he asked.

"In a minute, if you wish it," returned his companion.

"You know her intimately, then?"

"Very. I buy all my greengrocery of her."

He bought all his greengrocery of her! She was mortal, then, and kept a shop. In a state of semi-bewilderment, Percival crossed the stage with his friend towards where the dancers stood. He heard her called by her name; she turned, and they were introduced.

Gracious powers! how a minute broke the enchantment of many weeks. The nymph of the Danube was habited in a faded green cloak, and straw bonnet, with limp and half-bleached pink ribbons clinging to its form. Her pallid and almost doughy face was deeply pitted with the small-pox; her skin was rough, from the constant layers of red and white paint it had to endure; her hair was twisted up into two paper-screws on her forehead; and her nails, which appeared at the ends of her worn-out gloves, almost tempted Percival to ask himself, in the words of a celebrated national poet, "Did you ever behold such a little black row?" Moreover, she had evidently been indulging in a meal from an edible root that nobody ever thinks of touching if they are going to an evening party afterwards.

And this, then, was the object of his affections! Had his love so blinded him that he never allowed for the advantages of light, dress, and distance? He fell back with a convulsive start, and, darting from his companion, rushed out of the theatre in the most frenzied manner possible, and hurried home; where, on gaining what he termed the solitude of his own chamber, he hid his head under the bed-clothes, and moaned grievously for half an



hour, until the lodgers, thinking he must be seriously ill, assembled in a body on the landing, and recalled him to his senses by breaking in the door,

It was his first love, and his last. The illusion had been too harshly broken for him ever to fall into the same error again. He put all womankind down as ballet-girls, and he invested them all with the same deceptive beauty. The theatre lost all its charms for him: he felt he saw everything through a false medium; and, mistrusting the rosy cheeks, white arms, and long dark tresses of the *coryphées*, he only pictured them as he would fain believe that they appeared at a morning rehearsal.

MORAL.

Young gentlemen! if you are particularly struck with any young lady whom you may meet in society, think of Mr. Jenks, and do not believe she is always as attractive as she appears at a time when her sole aim may be to seem pleasant and agreeable. Remember, that the following morning she may be as altered as a *cottage ornée*—which you have only seen before during the summer—appears on Christmas day; in fact, that there is an extreme difference between night and morning in the appearance of a beauty—an assertion, to the truth of which those who have seen the lady passengers of a night coach or French diligence turn out to breakfast, can fully testify. Trust rather to the mind than to the face; and if you are in a hurry to propose, ask yourself candidly whether you think the same impression would have been made had you been born blind. There is a theatrical medium in the great world, as well as in a playhouse, through which alone we view its most agreeable scenes. This will flatter and disguise all objects for a time, but sooner or later you will find them out, and come to the conclusion, that infatuation and enthusiasm are delightful passions in their way, until you are admitted by experience *behind the scenes*.

A LITTLE TALK ABOUT SCIENCE AND THE SHOW-FOLKS.

WE are, certainly, getting too refined to be jovial, and our increased education is gradually driving out of our hearts what little inclination to honest mirth the altered times have left us. All the sports that made old England "merrie" at that jocund period "once upon a time," are disappearing one by one; and Science has so startled our ancient pastimes, that few have had the good fortune to withstand her march, and assert their ancient powers of attraction for the citizens of London. Nor will they ever rise again; or, if they do, their re-appearance will be in some altered and deeply philosophical form; so that honest old Strutt himself would not recognise those games, whose principles and laws he has so fondly collected and chronicled. The turf of the tilt-yard would be supplanted by wooden blocks and asphalte; the boats of the players at the water-quintain would be propelled by the Archimedes screw, instead of the lusty arms of "the youthe of Finsburie and Chepe:" the marching watch of St. John's Eve in their bright armour, and with their blazing cressets, would give place to a procession of policemen in India-rubber cloaks, bearing a dazzling and bewildering galaxy of Bude lights: the Yule-log of Christmas would yield to a lump of anthracite coal in a Dr. Arnott's stove, or a Chunk, or a Harper and Joyce, or a Vesta, or some other uncomfortable-looking, black, cheerless substitute for a proper grate fire, of which every one knows half the pleasure is to look at and poke: the simple feats of the glee-men and joculars would be eclipsed by the more astounding

illusions of Mr. Bachhoffner at the Polytechnic Institution: the garlands would revolve round the Maypole by voltaic electricity; and the "miracles, mysteries, and moralities" performed on carts during the season of Lent, would be supplanted by travelling lecturers from scientific institutions, in perambulating vans driven by steam, or raised gently from one spot to another by numerous balloons guided by Mr. Green's whirligigs.

We assert, firmly and deliberately, all these things would happen—nay, they will happen; and we are not far from the period of the crisis. The time is fast approaching when our very nurseries will be schools for science; when our children's first books will be treatises on deeply scientific subjects; and when even their playthings will partake of the change. The Dutch toys will be thrown aside for the Daguerreotype; the doll's house will be a model of the Adelaide Gallery; and the nursery carpets and morning dresses will be burnt full of holes by the acid from the doll's galvanic trough or hydrogen apparatus. Cheap air-pumps will be imported from Holland in chip boxes, with barrels fitted up on the principle of the pop-gun; and dumps will be no longer cast in pipe-clay moulds, but turned out fresh and sharp by the electrotpe—another type of the advancing age. Noah's arks will assume the form of chemical-experiment boxes: the beasts and birds will turn to rows of labelled reagents, and Noah and his family, sticks, little round hats and all, will be transformed into test-tubes and spirit-lamps. The magic-lantern will be cast aside for the gas microscope; and our old and once-loved friends, the devil and the baker, the tiger that rolls his eyes, and the birds that fly out of the pie, will at last vanish away to nothing in reality, before the magnified attractions of the claws of

the *Dytiscus Marginalis*, the wing of the *Libellula*, or the wriggling abominations of a drop of dirty water; of which horrors, collected from standing pools and crammed into the smallest possible quantity of fluid that will allow them room to move, people go away from the exhibition firmly convinced that they allow millions to pass down their *œsophagus* (it used to be called gullet) every time they take a draught of water, and they abandon it in consequence, and stick to Guinness and Whitbread. We do not think that any microscopic exhibitor has yet been rash enough to show what species of monstrous animaculæ is found in a pot of stout or "half-and-half."

Amongst the changes and innovations made by what the advocates of education are pleased to call "an improved state of the mental condition of the people," we regret none more than that which has led to the gradual extinction of our ancient friends, the Mountebanks. We do not mean the peripatetic vendors of quack medicines—they had passed away long before we made our first *début* upon the stage of the minor theatre of our existence; but we allude to the equestrian performers, who formerly pitched their ring, and delighted us for a summer's afternoon with their wonderful feats, on some waste piece of ground in our village. Alas! the waste pieces of ground are no longer to be discovered, for they have been enclosed and built upon; and cottages, teeming with dirty squalid children have supplanted the glittering troop that were accustomed to perform their manœuvres on the same spot.

We well recollect the site of their most favourite *al fresco* theatre, when they paid us a visit. It was a smooth patch of grass, at the end of the village, surrounded by goodly horse-chestnut trees, that formed a pleasant shade from the sun, except where his beams fell in playful and

quivering patches upon the arena. Part of this spot was bounded by one of our old abbey walls, and here was the gallery. How lucky did we think ourselves if we could procure a place on this favoured elevation, after clambering up the loose stones and rugged ivy that clung to it, and seat ourselves amidst the crowd of dirty little street boys who swarmed on its summit! And how well we were enabled to see the performance, without being expected to give anything! We have never felt the same pleasure since; not even in the curtained pigeon-holes of the Opera, or the private boxes of the great theatres. We enjoyed a faint reminiscence of bygone times one night in the gallery at Astley's, but this was far from our former sensations; for the tawdry ceiling was above us instead of the clear blue summer sky; the escaping gas supplied the place of the sweet country air, and the chirping of the birds in the old chestnut trees was but ill supplied by the occasional catcall of some restless spectator, impatient for the commencement of even an Astley orchestra.

To our juvenile minds the Mountebanks were beings of an elevated and barely comprehensible station. We knew them to be mortal, for they drank beer from pewter pots during the performances, and put on old great coats, which, tattered and buttonless, certainly partook of our own world,—after any very violent exertions. But then the merryman beat all our most acute conjectures as to his existence. Could he ever have been a baby? We thought not, but rather inclined to the idea that he was some wonderful creation that had dropped ready-made from the clouds, always happy and laughing, and possessing the mysterious power of throwing the same spell over his auditors. An ignorant companion once attempted to make us believe that a sallow-faced and melancholy-



looking man whom we saw buying a loaf and a red herring in a chandler's shop the day after one of the performances was the clown ; but we did not credit his statement for an instant. No, no—the merryman would not have bought anything. He would have gone boldly into the shop (probably he would have jumped through the door), and having thrust a butter-firkin on the head of the man who kept it, would have filled his pockets with what he wanted, and then driven them off on a truck of his own impromptu



construction, with a flitch of ~~bacon~~ for the body, and cheeses for wheels. We were half convinced that his life was a species of perpetual pantomime; that he threw somersets into bed when he retired for the night, if, indeed, he ever slept; and that he rolled out in the morning with his head between his heels, crowing and laughing as we loved to hear him. The performances usually concluded by a lottery, which was conducted by the master of the ring, and to which a chance of participating in its prizes was obtained by the purchase of shilling tickets. Great inducements were held out to entice the rustics to risk their coin in the venture. A leg of mutton, a small pig — nay, a watch, was sometimes the chief prize; but we noticed that, somewhat singularly, these valuable articles were always gained by some stranger whom nobody knew. No suspicion was, however, excited, and we were perfectly content with the metal pencilcase, the painted tin waiter, or the pair of snuffers, with which the blind goddess favoured us.

If a fair passed over without being attended by a show of any kind, it was a matter of deep concern to us. We believed that the economy of our village must be at a low ebb, and that the agricultural transactions connected with our annual festival could not be carried on with their usual spirit and business, unless a few sights were exhibited, in order to draw the neighbouring people together for the day. And how we used to look out for the shows the night before the fair! With what joy we received the intelligence that the postman had passed six caravans in the lane between our village and the next town; and with what mysterious importance we communicated the intelligence to our companions! And when they arrived, how we watched their heavy yellow carriages drag up the street, one after another, each drawn by one miserable horse, looking like the industrious flea in the omnibus, compared to the size of the vehicle; with the sometimes additional help of a donkey fastened by old cord to the shafts! We formed a thousand surmises as to their contents, until a strange howl from the interior of one of them betrayed the secret that they were "wild beasts." From that moment there was good-bye to anything like staying in-doors. It was no use sending the servants after us, for we eluded their grasp by creeping under the wheels or behind the caravans; and we watched, with the most intense interest, the gradual placing of the large carriages, to form the quadrangle that was to constitute the show of to-morrow.

A "dancing show" was, however, our greatest delight; and hour after hour have we loitered about the progressive elevation of the spars and canvas, until the complete pavilion stood before us. How happy we thought ourselves in being able to pick up the hammer when it fell,

and give it to the man on the rickety blue ladder, who was nailing to the front poles a beautiful piece of red festoon, edged with black, and adorned with round ornaments of thin brass, like the escutcheons of bed-posts! Could it be possible that those dirty people in shirt-sleeves, who were drawing out the long poles from the flat wagon, were the same who would appear on its platform the next day, in flesh-coloured tights and velvet jackets? Was it really the case that the woman in the dingy common shawl, and without a bonnet, returning from the baker's with a stale half-quartern under her arm, would dance outside to-morrow in spangled muslin and satin shoes?—(pipe-played, to be sure, but still satin). It was possible, we knew, and yet we scarcely believed it.

It was not until towards the afternoon of our fair that the exhibitions commenced. During the earlier part of the day the show assumed an air of impressive solemnity in its deserted loneliness, with its gaudy draperies moving gravely in the wind. No one was, as yet, on its platform: a boy occasionally crossed the arena with a beer-can; but that was all. There was no further notification of its internal existence; but we knew the preparations must be extensive and important. At last, afternoon came, and with it the show-folks, one after another, up the steps to the front platform. Then we were in our glory; an irresistible attraction bound us to the spot, and all else was forgotten. In vain did the nursery-dinner wait; we had no hunger beyond that which a penny slice of cold plum-pudding, or a mealy-looking pie, could appease; and, hidden by the crowd, we enjoyed the varying performance, hour after hour, sorry when the ominous "All in to commence," took the actors, for a while, from our delighted gaze. There was a wild Indian, with a red-ochre face and

black legs; a great curtain-ring in his nose, a large club, and a feather cap, like the penny portraits of Mr. H. Wallack, as Rolla, with all his limbs extended, holding a frightened doll on his left shoulder. There was also a countryman, with a great nosegay and striped blue stockings, who was perpetually getting knocked down, and whose appellation appeared to be "Cauliflower;" with three gentlemen, in fancy dresses of every costume on the face of the globe, most ingeniously combined; who waltzed with the three beautiful ladies, except when the music stopped, and then the ladies walked arm-in-arm by themselves, up and down the platform; and Mr. Merryman—dear, foolish, ill-used Mr. Merryman—led the master of the concern, a very fat man, in feathers and a red sash, to the front, and commenced haranguing the crowd after his master's dictation. What roars of laughter arose when he called exhibition *eggs and bacon*, and sport and pastime *pork and parsnips*; and how we wondered if it hurt him when he was whipped. Oh! how delightful it all was!

The interior of the show was equally gratifying. We were told that the outside was always the best; it might have been, but there was a great deal in paying to see the performance, whereas the other was gratis. We well remember its rough benches, formed of planks laid upon tubs; its tottering steps that conducted to the front seats, its hoops of candles, its pole that intercepted the view in the middle; and its coarsely-painted scenery—then far beyond the choicest of Stanfield's dioramas, as specimens of art, at least to our eyes. Sometimes the performance was conjuring; and sometimes it was a play, with a comic song between (sung by the countryman) whose chorus was always "Ri tit fol iddledy, tit fol iddledy, tiddledy heigh gee boo;" or, occasionally, a young lady danced a horn-

pipe on a little piece of board, laid down for the purpose, after which she made a collection for pence; the Pantaloon, who played the drum and pandean pipes, informing the company, "it was all she had for her own perquisite, to buy trinkets with;" she said "trinkets" meaning bread and cheese, and yellow soap. Commonplace and spiritless the performance doubtless was, but it was sufficiently attractive to make us keenly regret when it was over. We could scarcely conceive that the ground where such feats took place was part of our common market-place; and yet there stood the old post in a corner of the show, that we knew so well; and long after the exhibition had departed we could trace the sawdust parallelogram that marked its former site, as we stood with much gratification on the spot which we knew had formed the mysterious *coulisses*.

The minor shows, of dwarfs, and giants, and white-haired Negresses, were always very engaging; although they had not the imposing air of the dancing shows. Their pictures were, however, sufficiently wonderful; and we were often disappointed at not finding the Turks and officers, and gentlemen and ladies, inside the caravan, who were painted outside as spectators of the exhibition. How we speculated as to the nature of the curiosities which the chintz drapery, stretched across the end of the show, veiled from our view! How portably, also, were the domestic interiors of these moving houses arranged! The small brass fire-place in the corner, that always smoked; the seats round the sides, formed of lockers; the trap-door in the roof, to admit air, or rather, we should say, to let it out; and the two windows with the gaudy shutters. Our chief desire, at that time, would have been to have lived in one of those perambulating residences, and travelled about wherever we liked.

Even the humble peep-shows were not without enjoying a share of our patronage; and we listened with the most juvenile credulity to the exhibitor's descriptions, as we stood behind the green-baize curtain, on the little low form that raised our eyes to a level with the wondrous lenses. At the time we write of, Mr. Weare's murder furnished abundant material for these migrating dioramas; and we perfectly recollect the series of peep-show views that the event gave birth to. The murder in Gill's-hill-lane; the pond at Elstree, where the body was found; the stable-yard of Probert's cottage; and the interior of the Crown court at Hertford—were all vividly impressed on our imagination; and even now we can picture them as if we had but seen them yesterday.

When the Mountebanks disappeared, our greatest juvenile pleasure went with them. For months afterwards we looked with no common interest and veneration upon the scene of their performances, where the horses' feet had cut up a circle on the turf, and the holes in the ground which the stakes had made that enclosed the ring, seemed the links which bound us to our former pleasures.

At length, a summer passed away, and the Mountebanks came not. We never saw them again. We thought we once recognised the merryman at Hampton races, and we grieved that he had descended to what we deemed the illegitimate drama. The piece of ground was dug and planted with potatoes; subsequently it became a timber-yard, where the very trees were cut up that formerly enclosed it; and there is now some talk in our parish of purchasing the lease of the ground and erecting a Literary and Scientific Institution thereon by subscription, to distribute philosophical knowledge amongst the inhabitants at a cheap rate, and to form a class for acquiring a perfect

understanding of the properties of polarized light, crystallography, and the condensation of carbonic acid gas.

Increasing years have changed our disposition, and shows and mountebanks have now lost their attractions. The joyous medium of childhood, through which we viewed their motley wonders, has been drawn aside, and we can only now look on them in the most literal and commonplace sense. Still, for the sake of old association, we sometimes pay a visit to them; and if a laugh is provoked by some absurdity that would formerly have excited astonishment; if we see, in the little people around us, something of the same delight which we once cordially entered into, surely our end is more than answered.

CANOVA'S FIRST LOVE.

THE old palace-clock of the imperial residence of Fontainebleau had just sounded its evening chimes, when Napoleon, drawing his chair near the blazing hearth of one of the antique apartments, gave himself freely up to one of those unrestrained and almost trifling conversations with Marie Louise, that he so loved to indulge in. His fine countenance had never borne an expression of *laissezaller* more simple or more gladsome. He laughed, he joked, and rubbed his hands with gaiety, as he smilingly provoked the Empress to hazard a few French words, still difficult for her to pronounce, and which she uttered with a delightful imperfection.

"Sire," exclaimed Duroc, opening the door of the chamber, "the Italian artist has arrived."

"Shew him in, then, immediately," returned the Emperor, placing his foot against the marble of the chimney-

piece, and pushing his *fauteuil* backwards, so as to leave a place for the new comer by his side.

The visitor entered, made a respectful salute to the two illustrious persons before whom he was introduced, and, upon a sign from Napoleon, took his seat with courteous ease, upon a chair which the Emperor himself had placed for him, before the fire-place.

"You are welcome to France, my dear Canova," said the master of Europe, with one of his most winning inflexions of voice; "but how pale and thin you have become since I last saw you! Decidedly you must quit Rome, and come to dwell with us in Paris; the air of our capital will restore your health and *embonpoint*. Look," he added, pinching the fresh and rosy cheek of Marie Louise with his small white hand; "look, how healthy we are in France!"

"Sire," returned the sculptor, "you must attribute my bad health to study, not to the climate of my country. Allow me, I beseech you, to return to Italy as soon as I have finished the bust which you have ordered me to execute."

"*Diable d'homme*," cried the Emperor, "to refuse to live near me. See! Louise; he has no other ambition than to be the first sculptor in the world, and he is all impatience to leave us, and return to chip marble at Rome, and produce some new work equally sublime as the Paris, the Terpsichore, the *Danseuses*, the Venus, or the Magdalen."

The conversation now became general, and a variety of topics were discussed: nothing appeared strange to Napoleon; he spoke of all with a profound knowledge of them, and astonished Canova by the superiority of his views.

"I have sixty millions of subjects," said Napoleon, smiling; "eight or nine hundred thousand soldiers, and a hundred thousand horses—the Romans themselves ne'er reckoned so many. I have contested forty battles; at that of Wagram, I fired a hundred thousand cannon balls away; and this lady, who was then Archduchess of Austria, would fain have seen me fall before one of them."

"*Il être bien frei,*" said Marie Louise, prettily affecting her natural accent.

"I should think," added Canova softly, "that things are now much altered."

"*Oh! cela est bien vrai!*" exclaimed the Empress warmly, speaking this time the best French in the world, and raising the hand of Napoleon to her lips, who put his arm round the waist of his young wife, and forced her to sit on his knees. "Bah! bah!" said he, as his blushing partner slightly resisted; "Canova is our friend, *et l'on ne se gêne pas devant ses amis*. Were he not so, I am sure his tender impassioned heart would rejoice to see a *ménage* so happy. *Tiens! Louise,*" he added, "I will tell you a story, of which you shall guess the hero, and then you will see if there is any harm in my toying with you before Canova;" and, still keeping the Empress a prisoner, he commenced:

"In the province of Tréviso there is a little village called Possagno. I shall open my tale there, for in this place my hero passed his infancy. His father, an architect, died at the age of twenty-seven, and his mother remarried Sartori de Crespano. The child, then about four years old, was named Antonio, and he dwelt with his stepfather; but he was harshly treated, and was at last sent to pass an autumn at Pradazzi with one of his

friends, named Faliero. This acquaintance, remarking the intelligence of his young visitor, and the instinct, with which he moulded a few clay images, placed him, as a pupil, with a sculptor of moderate talents, named Torretto."

"Is it possible!" interrupted Canova, confounded; "your majesty knows, then, the most minute details of my private life?"

"And of many others," returned Napoleon, with a smile, as he continued.

"Torretto was a severe master, although a good one, and exercised a strict *surveillance* over his favourite pupil; nevertheless, he could not prevent his occasionally stealing from the *atelier* to dance at the *fêtes* in the vicinity. He was then sixteen years old. One day, during the vintage, he fell in with a joyous troop of peasant girls, clad in their best habits in honour of a *jour de vengeance*; and things so fell out, that one of them, named Bettina Biasi, finished by placing her arm within that of Antonio, and all that evening they danced together in the Tarantella."

A sigh escaped from Canova's breast: the Emperor pressed the hand of Marie Louise, to draw her attention, but without interrupting his recital.

"Bettina," he continued, "was but fourteen. Her large black eyes sparkled like globes of fire; my two hands would have been too large to span her slender waist; and more beautiful hair was never seen than hers. Well, all went on smoothly, and they met often; they formed projects of marriage, and the union was nearly completed between them, when Torretto and Faliero learned, for the first time, what was passing. They foresaw that this marriage would destroy the brilliant career of their *protégé* . . .

One night, they both entered Antonio's chamber, and ordered him to follow them. In spite of his tears, his resistance, and his grief, they carried him with them to Venice, and there, during one entire year, they kept a strict watch over him, and compelled him to seek, in his noble art, that consolation which the 'pure and deep caverns of memory' denied him.

"Time, however, flew on with his untiring wings, and the bright reputation of the young sculptor gradually developed itself. He became rich and celebrated, and Volpato played his cards so well, that his pupil thought much less of Bettina Biasi, and occupied himself much more with Domenica, the handsome coquetting daughter of the engraver. A marriage was spoken of, but as Domenica was only thirteen years of age, they betrothed the two lovers, and the nuptials were postponed until the following year. Alas! for the affection of a flirt: one year afterwards, Domenica married Raphael Morghani! The forsaken lover nearly sank beneath the cruel blow that his false intended had brought upon him."

Canova had fallen into a profound reverie, and appeared no longer to hear a syllable of what was passing around him. The Emperor continued:

"His physicians and friends advised him to try the benefit of his native air. He departed then; but, on the way, the long-slumbering thoughts of his almost forgotten Bettina arose again, and he pictured her once more so young, so beautiful, so disinterested in her love, and more gay and laughing than ever.

"No sooner had he caught the first glimpse of the church tower of Possagno, than, too much excited to loiter in the drawling *vetturino*, he sprang to the ground, and reached the gates of the little town by a short footpath.

But his arrival had been anticipated, and a crowd of young people, awaiting his approach, pressed forward to welcome him, making the country resound with their joyous *vivas*. He could not address them, for his heart was too full, and tears were streaming from his eyes. The road was covered with laurels and *immortelles*; all the inhabitants of Possagno in their *fête* dresses, women, children, and vine-dressers, with green branches in their hands, bordered the road, and saluted their clever young compatriot as he advanced. His old master, the venerable Torretto, came to press him to his heart; and behind him stood a young female, who was gazing with quivering lip and moistened cheek upon the young sculptor. '*Bettina! mia Bettina!*' cried Canova, for it was the fair girl herself.

"Ah! sire! sire!" interrupted Canova, "for pity's sake do not proceed further with a recital that awakens in me so many cruel *souvenirs*."

But Napoleon felt gratified at the impression he was producing; the sculptor was deeply affected, and Marie Louise was listening with intense interest.

"Hear the remainder, Louise," said he, addressing himself entirely to the Empress. "We are approaching the *dénouement*, and it is worthy the rest of the story. Five years had diminished nothing of Bettina's beauty. She was pale, it is true, and resembled one of Canova's own white marble statues, of which some whimsical artist had coloured the hair and eyes. 'Oh! Bettina!' he exclaimed, leading her a little apart from the throng that was pressing around him;—'you will pardon my ingratitude, will you not? you will render me that happiness of which I am so little worthy? I have but seen you

to find all our holy and fervent love of other days revived!"

"I suffered much," said the beautiful girl, in a voice of deep emotion; "I suffered much, *Antonio mia*, when I learnt that you were about to marry *Domenica*; and yet, my friend, I knew that the humble peasant girl of *Pradazzi*,—that the betrothed of the apprentice *Antonio*, will be ill-received as the wife of the celebrated sculptor, *Canova*. Nevertheless, I refused all the offers that were addressed to me, for five years, and during that time I lived only for your remembrance. But when I learnt that you were about to return to *Possagno*; when I recollected, however circumstances might be changed between us, that you would not see me again without some emotion, for we loved each other dearly! when I thought that, perhaps, we might be both feeble enough to renew these projects rendered almost futile by your actual position; I wished to avoid not only the possibility of yielding to them, but, still more the heart-rending agitation our meeting would have caused. . . . I am married."—"Married, *Bettina*!"—"It is now eight days since, to a worthy young man, who has sought my hand for four years."

"*Oh! voilà une noble et digne créature!*" cried *Marie Louise*, with all her natural enthusiasm, as *Canova* quitted his seat, on the Emperor finishing his recital, and retired into the recess of the window to conceal his emotion.

At this moment they heard a soft knock at the door, and the Duke of *Otranto*, the Minister of Police, entered.

"Truly, *M. le Duc*," said *Napoleon*, "you could not arrive more *à propos*. See the effect I have just produced, thanks to the information you brought me from Italy a week back. Adieu, *Canova*!" he added, laying his hand

on the shoulder of the sculptor. "Occupy yourself with the bust, and when you have finished it, return to Italy if you will. Ah! the Emperor's trade is a rude one, and it is not often I can enjoy a fire-side conversation with my wife and friend, as I have done this evening. *Allons, M. le Duc;*" and he left the apartment.

This evening was that of the 30th October, 1810; and the Emperor, Marie Louise, and Canova had passed it in the same room where, on the 11th of April, 1814, Napoleon signed his abdication.

AN ENGLISH MASQUERADE.

THERE are many dreary things in the world besides death, debtors' prisons, and theatres by daylight. A "genteel" dinner-party of rural aristocracy is amazingly slow, and so is a wet Sunday at Worthing. The same pantomime seen half a dozen times has a dispiriting effect; and certain dull debates in the Houses of Parliament incite the belief that the members' skulls are as somniferous and hollow as dried poppy-heads. The archives of Exeter Hall, doubtless, contain a very shady chronicle of not over-lively events. Solitary men, in new lodgings, feel exquisitely cheerless; and the Red House at Battersea, in the middle of January, ceases to impart anything like hilarity to our feelings.

But the saddest concern of all—the ghost of fun decked in the worn-out trappings of happiness,—a gilt skeleton adorned with wreaths of artificial flowers,—a hearse hung round with illumination lamps,—is a masquerade in England.

Whether it be that the open disposition of the national

character unfits us for assuming the mask with becoming spirit, or whether in reality our wit is too ponderous to flash about these entertainments as it ought to do, we leave others to determine; but, certain it is, that every successive attempt to establish a masquerade as one of our regular amusements, proves more and more how utterly incapable we are of entering into its humour, in respect to other European nations; and we affirm this advisedly, for we have had many opportunities of drawing the comparison. We have been deluded into the Tarantella at Naples by a pair of large black eyes, whose glances implied much more, even through the peep-holes of a mask, than those of a colder clime could express with the assistance of the whole face; and we have fallen quite as deeply in love with a round, dimpled chin, short upper lip, and row of dazzling pearly teeth, shrouded by the black fringe of the vizor, as with the whole *contour* of some other lovely countenance; for your mask is a great auxiliary to female attractions; it heightens beauty by half concealing it; and, *vice versâ*, it covers all defects. We have, also,

“Some weeks before Shrove-Tuesday comes about,”

loured as a modern Greek, in the full blaze of day, at the *cafés* in the Piazza St. Marco at Venice; or haply toiled up the inclined planes of the Campanile to shower chocolate *bonbons* from the summit upon the crowd below; and, though last, not least in our memory, we have, in our capacity of a student of the Quartier Latin, worn a *débardeur's* dress for a whole week together, and whirled and galloped to the music of Musard and Magnus in the *salle* of the Rue Vivienne, or the more boisterous assembly of the Prado, until the *chiffonniers* had been about some time before we wandered back to our abode on a *sixième*

in the Rue St. Jacques. Nay, even this conclusion to a night's revelry has been sometimes denied; for, with the candour of Rousseau, we admit that we have sometimes passed the night in the *violon* below the staircase of the Opera Comique, and appeared before the police the next morning in our glazed hat, blue shirt, and black velvet trousers, to make what excuse we best might for having, under the very shadow of the *garde municipale*, with their tiger-skin helmets, given ourselves up, "*un p'tit peu trop fort*," to the *abandon* of the dance, in defiance of the placard which informed us that our style was "*défendu par les autorités*." Should you wish the scene brought pictorially before your eyes, we unhesitatingly refer you to the vivid sketches of our friend Gavarni.

Strange to say, we had never seen a masquerade in England,—principally, we believe, on account of the price of admission having been generally fixed at a sum which, if expended, would swamp all hopes of dinner for the next fortnight to a scribbler of the present day. We "assisted" (as they say abroad), it is true, at the *bal masqué* given by Jullien at Drury Lane; but this was a very dull affair, although hundreds had paid their guinea for admission,—an expenditure which we confess to have avoided, now it is all passed, by going as a mere spectator to the dress-circle, and jumping down into the arena during a *galoppe monstre*, when the policeman in attendance had been violently carried off by sundry couples in the general whirl.

Curiosity to see how a masquerade would be conducted in England, and the present of a ticket, were the exciting causes of the visit we paid a short time since to Vauxhall. It was with much satisfaction we read an announcement that the gardens were to open once again. We had not

quite forgotten the excitement of the first time we went there; we are afraid to say how long back, but it was at the time when "Mother Town" dispensed coffee and rolls to the boys of Merchant-Tailors' School, the constant use of which milk-diet did not prevent us on this event from getting slightly elevated, and performing an *impromptu pas-de-deux* with one of the red-coated waiters in front of the supper-box. We still think that, not being accustomed to them, it must have been the profusion of lamps which upset our stomach, for anatomy has since taught us the intimate connexion between that organ and the eyes. Our friends hold a different opinion, and incline to the belief that it was the "rack punch," a beverage well named, indeed, if the state of the head the next day be taken into consideration.

We were much grieved when we were informed last year that Vauxhall was about to close for ever! We could not believe that any one would ever have the hardihood to take down or remove those gaudy emblems that had whilome so much bewildered us—the balloon going up with flags and crowns—the stars, mottoes, and devices. The orchestra, too, was to be razed to the ground—that illuminated pepper-box from which we had heard so many diverting songs, when the musicians played in all the glory of their cocked hats; and the gentleman in white kids, whom nobody knew, led forth the lady, whom everybody knew, to sing, in a grand black velvet hat adorned with feathers from a cock's tail turned downwards, and trimmed apparently with bits of black tobacco-pipe, French-polished. And they coolly talked of building houses—common, uninteresting houses!—on the very ground that the rockets had gone up from, and, occasionally, come down again through the sky-lights of the neighbouring dwellings,

bursting and shedding their coloured stars upon the stair-cases in a most diverting manner, and allowing the inhabitants a private exhibition to themselves. The whole speculation was wild and impossible. We are convinced, had the houses been built and taken on lease, that the immortal Simpson, angered at the profanation, would have come back from the shades, and called around him all the spirits who shed lustre over Vauxhall in former times, to aid him in perpetually ringing the bells, and making strange noises, after the fashion of haunted houses, upon the authorities of Glanville and Aubrey, until the dwellers therein gave warning and fled away, leaving the elevations to keep standing alone, or tumble down by degrees, as they best might.

Mais, revenons à nos moutons, which, being an entirely novel phrase, never before made use of, we may as well explain to signify that we got a ticket for the masquerade, and intended to go. The choice of a costume for a time somewhat perplexed us; until, having inquired the price of hire, and inspected every dress in Nathan's wardrobes, from the habit of the field-officer at fifteen shillings, to the Albanian pirate at three guineas, we finally decided upon arraying ourselves as "a gent of the nineteenth century;" and therefore, when the eventful evening arrived, we arrayed ourselves in one of the fashionable five-and-twenty-shilling-union-workhouse Taghionis now so popular, and a long bright blue satin stock, worked with gold flies and forget-me-nots, which was fastened by a massy pin, representing a gilt lobworm twirling round a large white currant, connected by a small jack-chain to another jewel, which had the appearance of a bird's egg set in a miniature-frame. We also turned up our wristbands over our cuffs, and wore our hat on one side; and,

having received the complimentary assurance of an esteemed friend that we looked "a thorough snob," we set off towards our destination about half-past eleven at night.

As we passed through Westminster some cabs rattled by, containing ladies and gentlemen, more or less disguised; but the first real evidence of the night's entertainment was presented at Vauxhall Bridge, where we saw a brigand in a magnificent dress of green baize, trimmed with pewter watches, calmly waiting at the toll-house for five-penny worth of coppers in change. His companion—they were both walking—had assumed the dress of an English peasant, in a smock-frock, and navigator's hat, and his appearance was much heightened by a large artificial nose, to which a pair of frizzly mustachios was attached. Their noble bearing did not appear to awe the toll-keeper in any way: on the contrary, he betrayed little courtesy towards them, and returned a sullen grunt only to a joke from the robber, who requested "he would bring out his scales, because he thought one of the half-pence was under weight."

A large crowd had assembled at the doors of the gardens, who received each fresh costume with enthusiastic cheers, and many humorous allusions to the characters assumed. The quiet aspect of our own dress saved us from any of these salutations; and passing through the Cimmerian glimmer of the entrance, we emerged from its gloom into the scene of festivity. The majority of the company were viewing the fireworks then exhibiting; but as we had no great desire to see what we had so often witnessed before, and which always appeared the same, except that the squibs were sometimes fixed in the middle of the frames, and the wheels outside, instead of the inverse

arrangement, we remained in the promenade, perfectly contented with hearing the distant sounds of admiration at the exploding rockets, which diverting practice has lived longer than any custom we can call to mind.

With the concluding bang of the last *bouquet*, the company returned to the illuminated portion of the gardens, and a motley tribe they appeared. There were certainly amongst them persons of rare and undoubted talent, who assumed the dress and manners of the lower classes with such exquisite truth, that you could hardly believe they had paid their half-guinea for admittance. Two young ladies, dressed as mountain sylphs, considerably enlivened the scene by the fay-like manner in which they occasionally put their feet on the shoulders of different individuals that passed; and a gentleman in an apron, with a long broom and a red nose, created much mirth by sweeping dust over everybody that came near him, especially annoying a knight in scale armour, who maintained a most lachrymose gravity of countenance all the evening, and fainting under the weight of his harness, looked as if he would have given the world for a pint of beer. A group of young ladies, also in pinafores and pink sashes, with hoops and skipping ropes, gave an air of innocence and childlike revelry to the *réunion*. We gazed at them with unfeigned interest, and moralizing even in the midst of masquerade, inwardly hoped that their hearts might ever be as pure and guileless as they then seemed,—a wish which towards the end of the evening, we certainly did not think appeared likely to be realized, when their merriment became rather Anacreontic than infantile.

As far as eating and drinking went, it is but justice to say that every one performed admirably; but we observed that, with the generality of the parties, jugs of stout and

dishes of cold beef had the preference in point of popularity over champagne and cold fowls. But the end was answered just the same, for it had the effect of making the company exceedingly bacchanalian after supper, when their wit broke into full play. We perceived that the most favourite humour consisted in running very fast along the walks, and yelling loudly,—certainly a facetious performance; and it was esteemed an excellent conceit to bolt through the middle of the quadrilles which were being perpetrated beneath the orchestra, and jostle the dancers one over the other.

It was evident that assumption of character was never once thought about. The only instance we remarked occurred whilst we were discussing some cold ham, when a young gentleman, habited as Jack Sheppard, walked into our box, and presenting a sixpenny pistol, shot a pea in our face, and then walked out again: and—*à propos des bottes*—there are many legends told of the filmy slices of ham at Vauxhall, which ought to be refuted. We never saw any that were cut much under the thickness of ordinary slices, so think, like many other popular errors, the tradition lives upon its former credit.

It will scarcely be credited that in the midst of all this gaiety we more than once caught ourselves yawning. Yet so it was: and only the wish to see if the mirth would take another turn, induced us to remain after a certain period. At last, even the vivacity of a recruiting party, who beat drums uninterruptedly the whole evening; and the vocalization of a ballad-singer, whose lungs would have worked a blast furnace, and the elegant evolutions of several energetic gentlemen, who were waltzing together to the band under the front walk, ceased to amuse us. ~~The~~ The grey light of morning was stealing over the gardens,

putting to shame the few glimmering lamps that flickered on the motto, "VIVE LE MASQUE," now rapidly decaying; the chirp of two or three daring sparrows, accustomed to early rising, had supplanted the imitations of Herr Von Joel; and the spire of the Hamburgh church was once more vividly thrown out in the "natural light" when we left the gardens, most grateful with ourselves for having been to a masquerade, on the same principle that we thank a man, who, wearing a bad coat, tells us the address of his tailor.

A LEGEND OF WINDSOR FOREST.

ONCE upon a time,—for we are writing an old English story, and we must begin in the old English style,—once upon a time then, there resided three brothers in an ancient but withal a goodlie mansion, that was built in the midst of one of the greenest knolls of trees in Windsor Forest. The exact date of their existence is not known, for the chronicles we write from have not been over particular on that point; but we are certain that it was a long time ago, for there were then many, many miles of leafy and uninterrupted verdure in the forest, and long deep glades of oak and beeches, that met overhead, and scarcely permitted the sun to throw his rays through their gothic arches upon the smooth turf below, except in gay and dancing beams, when the wind played with their green branches and moved them gently on one side. A fair and goodly expanse of noble trees, and a broad track of thick underwood, was the merry forest at that time. Those hamlets that were in being upon its confines, were not, as they are now, surrounded by large pastures

and level roads, but they lay quite embosomed in the foliage; and it was pleasant to see their little church spires peeping out above the trees, as they glittered in the warm and bright sunlight of a summer afternoon. All was quiet and repose; and if the solitude of the greenwood was ever disturbed, it could be only by the jovial train of hunters in Lincoln green, who sometimes hurried along its avenues, making the glades ring again with the sounds of their horns and merriment.

But amongst all the jolly green-coated men who rode whooping, and blowing, and clanging, through the coverts, none had lighter hearts or surer aims than our three brothers. They had been left their own masters at an early age; and with little to think of, and less to care about, a fine life they led. Every morning they would saddle their horses, and turn out to hunt all day long; and, when they returned home at night, they would bring with them their companions of the chase, and keep up such orgies at their house, that the mavis had generally begun to warble in the thickets, in honour of the rising sun, long before they thought of parting. But this was not all. Sometimes in the summer, they would lock up their doors, and, taking their spears and dogs with them, would go and pass whole days together in the forest, in company with the same roysterers, returning only to procure fresh flagons of wine for the evening banquet. A merry time that was which they spent in the green woods. They killed their game, and cooked it themselves over a fire kindled on the ground; and after that they drank, and sang, and frolicked about upon the grass around the embers, until the very fairies, who existed at that period, and who, from time immemorial, have been connected with trees, turf, and toadstools, took fright at their up-

roarious mirth, and ran and tumbled one over the other down the glen to some more quiet spot, well knowing that they could have no influence over such careless and independent mortals. Sometimes, to be sure, out of spite, when the brothers and their friends had tippled too much sack, the little spirits would venture to approach, creeping under the moss, and gliding from one harebell to another ; and then they would play them such pranks, that the very trees appeared to increase in number, and turn round before them ; which circumstance the brothers always attributed to the fact of their having eaten too much venison, and so overloaded their stomachs. Even at the remote period we are writing of, men sought to attribute the eccentric imaginary whizzlegig, which spun before their eyes as they closed them to go to sleep, rather to what they had eaten than to what they had drunk.

If any difference existed in the characters of the three brothers, it certainly was, that the youngest was more sentimental and refined in his feelings than the others. He, doubtless, partook of the disposition of all youngest brothers in old legends and fairy tales, who are generally the heroes of the story, and get through all their scrapes with the best possible reflections on their characters. Not that he hung back from joining in the amusements of the others, for his wine-cup was always the best filled, and his laugh the loudest of the forest circle ; but he would sometimes fall into sad fits of abstraction during their banquets, or wander quite away by himself to some secluded part of the greenwood, where his companions would find him, sitting in deep thought under some old tree, engaged in listlessly cutting his arrows to pieces, or some equally profitable and industrious amusement. Had the other brothers ever thought that there was such a

thing as love in the world, beyond the reasonable affection a man may be supposed to possess for his horse, his merlin, or dogs, or sisters, or other members of his family, they would probably have divined the cause; but, as it was, they never dreamt of such a thing; and Mark himself, for so was the youngest called, although he was continually dreaming of a pair of bright eyes he had encountered one day in the forest, was not quite sure he had got his own consent, leaving alone the lady's. Marriage, and the future, were very well for older heads to think about; but what were they to him? He was young, and handsome, and brave—the world smiled on him with its eyes of sunshine; and all was gay and cloudless around him. Alas! that the bright happy thoughts with which youth clothes its imagination, endure not through our life! What a beaming paradise would our beautiful earth otherwise become!

Things were in this state, when, one fine evening in autumn, our three brothers met under their accustomed tree, and commenced the old story of cooking, eating, and drinking, over again. They had fallen in with good luck that day in the chase, and, in consequence, their spirits were running in a most happy vein, to which jollity potent draughts of old wine no doubt added. But we cannot eat and drink *à perpétuité*, as the French tombstones have it; and, accordingly, the two eldest gradually composed themselves to slumber away the fumes of their cups, while Mark, finding he could not go to sleep so soon (according to the established law of lovers, who ought always to lie awake all night), was indulging in his usual train of thought, and indolently poking about the embers of the fire with his spear, for want of better amusement. Suddenly, he thought he perceived some motion

in an old oak that confronted him; and, as he watched closer, to his great wonder, the tree gradually resolved itself into the outlines of a human form. The large excrescence at the top of the trunk took some sort of resemblance to regular features; the two lower branches dropped down in the form of arms, and the gnarled and knotty roots, at least as much of them as appeared above ground, formed themselves into two club-feet.

"Glad to see you," said the strange figure to Mark, in a tone of the utmost familiarity, at the same time winking one of his knots.

Mark's first impulse upon being so oddly addressed, after having opened his eyes very widely indeed, was to attempt to arouse his brothers; which feat he was about to perform by the summary process of throwing his spear at them, when the figure continued:—

"Don't wake your brothers; my business is with you, and you alone, and therefore they may sleep on for that;" and there was something so excessively good-tempered in the old tree's face, that Mark paused, and took courage to inquire, "whom he had the pleasure of addressing."

"You may well ask," said the figure. "I am the guardian spirit of Windsor Forest, and every living thing that grows upon it is under my protection, from the oaks to the daisies."

"You must have a great charge, then," said Mark, gaining courage as he spoke—"a very great charge."

"Ah!" returned the spirit, in a tone of weariness, "you may say that. The old oaks are quiet and still enough for such tough weather-beaten fellows; but the young saplings and beeches are sad wild dogs, and I have very little power over the ferns—they run everywhere. Will you oblige me by moving that smoky mouldering log of wood

a little further off? it irritates my throat;" and hereupon the gnome fell into such a fit of coughing, that he got quite red in the bark; and the very birds that were roosting in the branches of his wig, flew whirring off with such a noise, you would have thought a hundred flags, each as big as the one on the Round Tower, were fluttering around him. Mark pushed the offending ember to a distance with his heel, and then waited for what next the spirit had to say:

"Your companions are jovial fellows," continued the oak; "very jovial fellows, indeed, but their merriment must come to an end some day. These things cannot last for ever; for were all my acorns turned into wine-casks, you would drain them dry at last. You, yourself, Mark, are getting on in years, and cannot expect to lead this life always."

"But why have you pitched upon me, above all others, to give this advice to?" inquired Mark, half inclined to be angry.

"Because," returned the gnome, "you are the most reasonable of the party. You are gayest also, it is true; but the day will come when you will be sleeping quietly beneath the turf, unwept and forgotten; and yet the old forest trees around you will flourish the same as ever."

"But we are leading a very pleasant life in the merry greenwood," replied Mark.

"Ay, but it is a useless one. You are sent on earth for other ends beyond your own amusement, and long and joyous as your life appears in anticipation, it is but an atom in the world of eternity—an acorn in a vast and mighty forest. Are you versed in history?" asked the oak, pushing back some misletoe from his eyes, and assuming a scholastic air.

Mark returned no answer : his whole library was comprised in an old illuminated missal, which he could not read ; for at the period we are writing about (*i. e.*, "once upon a time"), education was not in a very flourishing state, nor had it been attempted to make reading uneasy, by pushing everybody up the ladder of learning against their will.

"Scenes have occurred," continued the spirit, "of greater import than any you have ever been engaged in, and on the confines of this forest, too ; but they will be forgotten in time, as your names also will pass away. Have you any wish to see the past?"

"I have more to see the future," returned Mark.

"As mortals generally have," replied the oak. "And yet the misery which anticipated grief would occasion, would be but poorly recompensed by the foreseen joy."

"Indeed," said Mark, "I never balanced those chances before ; but I begin to think that you are right."

"And I know I am," returned his visitor. "But you shall see all—the past, present, and to come. Mount my branches, and do not bruise me too much in climbing up, for I cannot afford to lose sap as I used to do."


At any other time Mark would have hesitated, but conversation had established a sort of intimacy between him and his quaint companion ; so he carefully mounted the trunk, and seated himself among the first branches. He had no sooner done so, than the oak gradually shot up far above the level of the other forest trees ; and then a dense mist rose all around him, breaking through the leafy foliage, like the smoke creeping through the top bundle of wood upon first lighting a fire. By degrees it cleared off again, and the space formed by its opening became lighter and lighter, until it was as bright as if a thousand Bude lights

had been shining on it; only, in those days, there was no New House of Commons, nor Polytechnic Institution—each equally celebrated for its natural magic and droll illusions.

“Attend!” said the oak, whose odd head had kept close to Mark all the time. “We are about to show you scenes that have long since been acted, and that will be in future times. Do not let a single picture escape you!”

As he spoke the mist entirely rolled away, and discovered the forest and its surrounding country, as one would imagine it seen from a considerable elevation, under the cheering influence of a bright summer morning. In the centre stood the fair castle, and the silvery Thames was creeping along the meadows in the vicinity, washing the then circumscribed walls with its pure and gentle wave. The gothic spires of Burnham Abbey were just visible above the surrounding foliage; and the sound of the old Saxon bells chiming to matins, floated gently on the wind, over the green and fresh plains, encompassing the few cottages, which, in after times, formed the village of Dorney. Further out in the goodly panorama, Runymede stretched its verdant expanse along the banks of the river, with the little town of Egham rising above the brow of the hill that overlooked it; and beyond this the proud monastery of Chertsey appeared in the distance, rearing its princely towers over the few rustic buildings that surrounded it. A long array of tall and goodly trees were gently waving their leafy branches over the rich pastures which they shadowed; and the whole space was dotted by numerous little villages, unassuming hostelries, and stately mansions, that have long since mouldered to decay—the ploughshare alone serving to uncover their remains, and give evidence that such buildings ever were.

As Mark gazed with admiration upon the pleasant scene which lay extended at his feet, the outlines gradually became less distinct, and then blended themselves with each other into new forms; but by a change perfectly imperceptible. The distant objects faded away entirely, and the Castle extended and enlarged its walls, which, still increasing, appeared to close around him like the wondrous images of magic. He seemed to be standing in the courtyard; and the Round Tower, then but slightly elevated above the surrounding turrets, was before him, glowing in the rich and yellow tint of an autumnal sunset. A fair and gentle girl was wandering in the *parterre* of the little verdant enclosure at the foot of the mount; she was so delicately formed, and withal so beautiful, as to seem some lovely spirit, under whose care the exquisite and varied offsprings of the teeming earth were placed—herself the fairest. She held a letter in her hand, which, in the absence of other means, she had secured with a slight tress of her long silky hair; and she was anxiously gazing at a latticed window of the tower, as if in expectation of some appointed signal. Shortly, the casement opened, and a young cavalier presented himself, over whose pale, yet handsome features, a bright gleam of joy radiated, as he saw his heart's fair idol in the garden beneath. He hastily let down a silken line, to which the lady attached the letter, and drawing it up again with the same rapidity, he kissed his hand and withdrew, as the measured tramp of the men-at-arms upon the ramparts warned him of their approach. We have observed, Mark's knowledge of history was rather limited; had it not been so, he might have known that the unfortunate James I. of Scotland was sometime a prisoner in the keep of Windsor Castle, and



that from his lone apartment he wooed and won the Lady Jane Beaufort.

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The neighing of the heavily-caparisoned war-horse, the hoarse bray of the clarion, the clanging of richly-embossed armour, and a long glittering array of battle troops, fluttering pennons, and waving plumes, succeeded to the scene of love and captivity that had, but even now, attracted Mark's attention. Surrounded by a natural amphitheatre of wooded hills, and supported by the branches of a huge oak, whose gnarled and misshapen roots grew towards a majestic river flowing beneath it, a gorgeous and emblazoned tent was shading a warlike party from the sun's rays. At a table in the centre of the group stood a man of high and noble bearing, encased in complete armour—the crown upon his helmet alone serving to show that he was a King of England. But there was little respect shown to his royalty; for warriors of stern and haughty demeanour had surrounded him, and appeared to be compelling him to sign a document that was lying on the table. He would willingly have refused; yet, as he gazed upon the broad plain before him, covered with thousands of stalwart men, and saw their long-continued lines still shining amidst the more distant foliage of the hill and the country far beyond, he became too well aware of the powerful force opposed against him, and he knew that the exasperated barons, who were standing firm and resolute around his *dais*, would not be again thwarted. With an ill suppressed emotion of powerless rage, he signed the parchment; and the loud and prolonged shout, which rang far and wide, echoing over hill and plain, until the forest groves caught up the sound, starting the deer from

its covert, proclaimed that the charter of England's liberty had received its monarch's signature on Runymede.

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The bright sunlight, under whose influence Mark had viewed the preceding vision, now faded away, and the approaching twilight appeared to be gradually stealing over the narrow and darkening streets of a small town. Numbers of the inhabitants had collected together in the open space, some pacing to and fro in a restless anxiety, and others debating in little groups, with much apparent energy of discourse; while the solemn voice of a monastery bell was sweeping over the adjacent country, with mournful and protracted tollings. Presently a long train of monks was visible at the distant end of the street, bearing lighted torches in their hands; and the tread, as of a large company became audible. On they came—soldiers, monks, and choristers—preceding a gorgeous bier, which now wound its course along a causeway, towards the monastery gate, and then entered that edifice, followed by a numerous train of people, who passed eagerly after it. Ere long the corpse was placed on tressels before the altar, and the "*De profundis*" began to peal through the lofty aisles. It was an imposing sight, that beautiful abbey, and the torches cast a lurid and fitful gleam upon the polished armour and silken scarfs suspended round its walls, whose owners had long slept beneath the hollow pavement. But the hymn soon stopped, and then the abbot, an austere and holy man, arose, and called the attention of the multitude to the corpse before them. Its features were distorted, and the dim blue eyes were open, with an expression that showed the parting struggle to have been severe. A small clot of blood had oozed through the cere-cloth in which the body was swathed, and trickled

slowly on the bier; a drooping crimson rose lay on its marble brow, and a diadem was bound, as if in mockery, upon the lifeless forehead. The people listened to the address of the abbot with respectful quietude; but a sound far different to prayer arose, when he told them that the body now brought to Chertsey Monastery for interment was that of their mild and gentle, but ill-fated monarch, Henry of Lancaster.

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The scene again changed; but this time it was the musical and joyous sound of woman's laughter that fell upon Mark's ear, instead of the angry excitement he had just witnessed. The locality was again at the river's side, and on a smooth green plain, encompassed by a belt of fine old trees;—those of our own time would not have recognised Datchet Mead in the field before them. A couple of stout serving-men, clad in blue hose and buff jerkins, were toiling with a buck-basket towards the bank of the river; and the occasional distrustful visage of a fat and jolly reveller appeared, above the heap of linen that enveloped him, too plainly apprehensive of his immersion in the water, which presently took place. In the distance, two fair dames were watching their trusty servitors with ill-suppressed glee, and their eyes were sparkling with mischief-loving wickedness. Still further on stood a man regarding the group, whose high intellectual forehead, piercing eye, and wonderfully expressive countenance, betokened him to be of no ordinary mind. He ever and anon penned some lines upon his tablets, as if to describe the mirth-provoking scene. The deer-stalker of Stratford-upon-Avon had become the Queen's favourite, and he was collecting subjects for her amusement.

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As the last tableau faded away, a drowsiness stole over Mark's spirit; and when he next came to himself the sun had not risen, but day was about to break, and the solitary note of the early bird alone echoed through the still forest. Mark rubbed his eyes, and endeavoured to collect the incidents of the night. His brothers were still sleeping around him, and opposite to him was the old tree, with which he had held such strange converse during the night; the empty drinking-horns were strewn upon the ground, as they had been left the evening before; his hunting-spear was still at his side; in fact, everything was as it ought to have been. Nevertheless, his visions had left a strange impression on his mind, that he could not well shake off; and when his brothers arose and went to join the chase again, Mark excused himself on the ground of indisposition; yet, as soon as they had departed, he bent his way towards a totally different part of the forest.

Time passed on, and two years after these events, Mark was reclining one evening under the old tree, once more at the trysting-place of other days and former revels; but now he was not alone. A female, radiant with all the fascinations of those potent philtres—youth and loveliness—was seated by his side, playing with the long chesnut hair, which now fell smoothly and gracefully over his shoulders; and, upon the turf before them, a little cherub-faced infant was toying with the daisies that peeped through the moss to do homage to the spring. The old oak's advice had not been without effect, for Mark was married; and his brothers themselves were also in a much fairer way of having their names handed down to posterity, than any of their wild freaks or dare-devil fancies would ever have done. The old mansion was put in order, and the

number of dogs and horses diminished, as its other occupants increased. The noisy gentlemen in yellow boots, who had been accustomed to come whenever they liked, and whoop, and shout, and sing, and drink the brothers' wine, were compelled to find some other quarters; and in a little time their tumultuous orgies were supplanted by the tiny prattle of infancy, repeating the homely old English distich, from the illuminated manuscript, which, handed from one generation to another, may be at present (at least, for aught we know) quietly reposing in musty indolence on the venerable shelves of the library of Eton College.

Courteous reader (or kind reader, or gentle reader, or wearied reader, or any other epithet you like to apply to yourself, in consonance with your present disposition), all fairy tales should have a "ryght pleasant and moral ende;" and so, in the name of all the young ladies whose abodes are visible from the summit of the Round Tower, we beg to tell our uproarious merry-making bachelor friends, that there still exist as many fair faces and saucy laughing eyes about Windsor Forest, as there were "once upon a time," who may possibly instruct them as to the best plan (in the words of the real Great Unknown—the celebrated anonymous author of "Mother Bunch, and the White Cat,") "of living happy all the rest of their days until they die."

A FRENCH SCHOOL.

THE continual minor annoyances and ludicrous mistakes to which our knowledge of English *academy French* perpetually subjected us in Paris, induced us to think about some means of acquiring the language, not as we learn it here, but as they speak it in France. We applied to several friends, touching the best means of attaining this end, and everybody said, "Go into a school for a short time; it is your best way." Thinking upon the old adage, which teaches us that what everybody says must be right, we accordingly made up our minds to become a schoolboy once more; and started one morning in quest of an "*institution*" likely to suit our purpose. We called at several, but none of the principals had the least idea of what a parlour-boarder meant, at least, in our sense of the word; and after splitting our boots to pieces in running up and down the Rue D'Enfer (whose miserably unpaved state entirely contradicts the received opinion that the "*descensus Averni*" is so easy, and shows that Virgil had not Paris in his eye when he wrote the *Æneid*), we at length closed with one in the Faubourg St. Jacques; where we stipulated to have a bedroom to ourselves, to dine with the master, and to be instructed in the French language, for one hundred francs per month. Now, we had three reasons for doing this. Firstly, it was cheap, including the tuition, of which we have stated we stood in great need; for like the Prioress, although we spoke the tongue

"Fayre and fetisly

After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,

Yet Frenche of Paris was to us unknowe;"

secondly, it was near the Barrière du Mont Parnasse, to whose amusements upon fête-days we had a great predilection; and lastly, we blush to own our cowardice, the *élèves* were all little boys, whom we could thrash into subjection, if they were impudent, or hallooed after us "*Rosbif Anglais*," or any other of the entertaining polyglot witticisms, which the said little boys of Paris, there called *gamims*, are apt to indulge in at the expense of our countrymen.

It was on a wet dirty day, at the commencement of November, that we left our lodgings at the Hôtel Cornaille, Place de L'Odeon, and, hiring a porter at the corner of the Rue [Racine, paddled up the always-dirty, never-ending Rue St. Jacques, to our new abode. On arriving we entered the great gates, with which all French schools are embellished, to make them look as much like prisons as possible, and immediately carried our effects to our bedroom. This was a closet about eight feet square, with a tiled floor; and all its furniture was comprised in a little wooden bedstead, like an elongated tray-stand, destitute of any kind of furniture, and not overladen with clothes; a deal chair, and a corresponding table, on which was an oval saucer to wash in, and a half-pint jug for water, with a small cotton towel. Had we been given to the study of astronomy, the room would have had many advantages; for it was ingeniously lighted by a window in the ceiling, which in fine weather illuminated our chamber tolerably well, but in the event of a heavy fall of snow left us in total darkness. It was late in the evening when we arrived, so we went to bed at once, supplying the want of sufficient covering to the bed by an English great-coat spread over the counterpane, and a carpet-bag, emptied

of its contents, made a sort of mat to lay on the ground and stand upon, whilst we undressed.

Long before daylight the next morning, we were aroused from our slumbers by the ringing of a singularly discordant bell, which called the poor little devils of *élèves* to the commencement of their studies. We heard much yawning and scrambling after clothes ; and then a silent and measured step as the usher assembled them, two and two, to march down stairs to school. About seven, the cook of the establishment—a dirty fellow, in a dirtier white night-cap—brought us a cup of milk, and a piece of bread, which we were informed was to be our *first* breakfast, the other taking place at half-past eleven. Unfortunately for us, we always had a great aversion to bread and milk ; although we remembered in our infancy to have possessed a book of nursery-rhymes, written by some anonymous poet of most fertile invention, wherein there was a picture of a little child with very curly hair dragging a respectable female, who looked something between a barmaid and a Sunday-school teacher, towards a cow feeding in a romantic meadow ; and moreover, some lines, which commenced, as well as our memory serves us,

“ Thank you, pretty cow, that made
Pleasant milk, to soak my bread ;”]

followed by some well-founded cautions to the animal not to chew hemlock, and other rank weeds ; still, we repeat, in spite of all these associations of childhood, we do not like bread and milk. So when we found this was all we were to be allowed before noon, we were out of temper ; and getting up very cross, we sauntered down into the playground to inspect our new residence.

The reader must imagine a large court, enclosed on

three sides by buildings and walls, and on the fourth by some palings, which separated it from the garden. The edifices on the right hand were divided into numerous little cells, each having a door, and these were dignified by titles placed over the said door, for the sole purpose, it appeared, of parents and friends to read. The first was called "*SALLE DE MUSIQUE*;" and, in consequence, was fitted up with a cistern and leaden trough, wherein the *élèves* performed their morning ablutions, when there chanced to be any water. Next to this was the "*SALLE DE DESSIN*," or drawing-room, as we called it; and some empty easels, with a very rickety form or two, showed that a great deal went on there. Then came the "*CLASSE*," or school-room, where the *élèves* studied, under the surveillance of two ushers, who ordained a rigid silence amongst their pupils, save and except at such times as the ushers were on duty as national guards. On the other side of the court were the dwelling-house and bedrooms, with the "*REFECTOIRE*" of the pupils, where they fed; and in the centre of the playground, which, from having two trees in it, was denominated the Park, were divers gymnastic poles and bars, and a deep well, which supplied the establishment with water, when anybody was at leisure to wind it up,—an operation of about half an hour.

We were tolerably hungry by eleven o'clock, and were not sorry to hear the bell ring for the pupils' breakfast, as we knew our own would follow. The *élèves* silently marched two and two into the room, and took their places at two long tables, where each boy had a fork, cup, and napkin laid for him—table-cloths and knives were unknown. An allowance of *potage*, composed of cabbage-water, and bits of bread, was first served out to each;

after that they were allowed some *vin ordinaire* and water;—but such wine! The only thing we could compare it to was ink and hard table-beer mixed together; and when this was well diluted with water, it may be conceived how delicious it was. A course of boiled *spinach* came next, and the breakfast concluded by a dab of currant jam being distributed to each, to be eaten with their bread, of which, however, there was an unlimited supply. This meal was repeated at five o'clock, with such agreeable variations as the taste of the cook directed, and called dinner; but beyond small hard pieces of boiled beef, and little bits of calf's liver, we did not see much meat. The *élèves* themselves had none of the spirit of English schoolboys, and indeed it was not to be wondered at, for we could not help contrasting the washy mess they were eating to the wholesome roast and boiled joints of our schools. They appeared to have no regular games or toys of their own, and all their playtime was spent in running after one another, with no other end, that we could perceive, than to keep themselves warm; for although the weather was desperately severe, there were no fires, or even fire-places, in some of the school-rooms. They never inflicted corporal punishment; but offenders were ordered to stand against some particular tree for half an hour, or be deprived of a dish at dinner. We thought it would have had a better effect to have fed them, and thrashed them well.

As may be imagined, from thus early rising, they were generally pretty well fatigued at night; and they were always in a deep sleep when we went to bed. As the way to our own chamber lay through that of the *élèves*, we had frequent opportunities of inspecting it. It was a large bare room, with the beds arranged round it and down the

middle ; and bore a close resemblance to the dormitory of a union workhouse. Some of the boys had little round mats by the beds, to stand upon and keep their feet from the cold glazed-tile floor ; but the majority, who could not afford to *hire* these luxuries of the master of the school, got on as well as they could without them. A dim and solitary lamp burnt all night in the chamber, barely lighting its extreme ends ; not an article of furniture but the beds themselves was in the room, with the exception of one chair for the usher ; and the windows all closed with that unattractive irreconcilability, which is only known to the windows of the Continent..

We contrived to get through a month at our "*institution*," and then we left. We had, it is true, picked up a good deal of French ; but in point of expense we had not saved much, for—the truth must out—we never got enough to eat ; and in consequence generally dined again at the nearest *restaurateur's*. Nay, more than once, we detected ourselves eating broiled herrings at a wine-shop outside the Barrière d'Arcueil.



SPECULATIONS ON MARRIAGE AND YOUNG LADIES.

“ I do much wonder, that one man, seeing how much another man is a fool, when he dedicates his behaviours to love, will, after he hath laughed at such shallow follies in others, become the argument of his own scorn by falling in love.”—*Much Ado about Nothing*.

It was for nurturing these, and other similar sentiments, that we always felt a greater degree of affection for Benedick than any other of Shakspeare's characters: his opinions accorded exactly with our own. We only regret that he so lost himself towards the termination of the play as to venture his happiness in the very bark he had sworn to mistrust. But he was deceived into taking this step, as well as Beatrice: and, if they had not crouched about in

summer-houses, playing the eaves-droppers to intentional discourses, we wager a case of Houbigant's best gloves that they would both have died single.

It is no proof that Benedick became a firm convert to matrimony, because he danced on his wedding-day, and wrote a sonnet to the lady of his love. The comedy ends, where all other merriment does, with marriage; and leaves us to form our own opinions as to whether the various couples, in the words of the old nursery tales, lived happy together all the rest of their lives, to a good old age. We only regret, for the sake of holding up a mirror to society in general, and mattheolians in particular, that the great dramatist did not add a sequel, and lay the period of the action, in the theatrical taste of the day, five years after his former production.

A high moral feeling has alone kept us, up to the present moment, from taking the fatal leap; and yet, with all our anti-matrimonial propensities, there is not a more fervent admirer of the *beau sexe* on the face of the civilized earth. We never went to an evening party in our life but we returned home madly, deeply, desperately in love,—not the calm, calculating attachment of a formal courtship, but that all-absorbing passion of four-and-twenty hours' duration, which only the powerful auxiliaries of champagne, chandeliers, and *cornets-à-piston* can produce.

Of course, everything must have a beginning, except rings, chaos, and Adelphi overtures, and, *par conséquence*, everybody has a first love—a hobbledehoy kind of an attachment, all letters and locks of hair. Foolish people, who speak a little French, will tell you "*on revient toujours à ses premiers amours!*" This we deny. We ourselves once had a first love, and a very pretty one too, but it was a long while ago. She made us a watch-guard of her own hair, and in return we gave her a kiss and a carved ivory

buckle which we bought at Boulogne for ten francs, and we supposed ourselves engaged, and wrote little notes all about nothing to each other every day. Gradually, however, the notes got shorter, and their transmission at longer intervals apart, and we finally "declared off" by a tacit agreement, and found out fresh flames. We did not see her for eight or ten years, and then we heard that she was married. We met a short time since with as reserved a greeting as if nothing had ever passed between us, and we began to ask ourselves what we could have found so bewitching in her. Indeed, we were almost sorry for the rencontre; for when we have not seen any object we once felt an interest in, for a long period, we only picture them as we knew them at the time of parting; and in this case we thought the visionary recollections we retained of the smiling sylph-like girl of nineteen far preferable to the substantial reality of the matron-approaching woman of thirty.

As for clothing a first love with all that halo of undying recollection and occasional yearning returns of old feelings, which is common in album poetry; it is all nonsense. From eighteen to twenty-two, the usual period of first-love, our ideas of future prospects and compatibility of disposition are rather vague and indefinite. We fall in love, and form plans of marriage under the conviction that our whole life is to be a succession of Kensington promenades, Zoological Sundays, and Hanover-square Room balls. We are, moreover, at this period, intensely susceptible,—our rough nature is the sand-paper upon which the match readily takes light, and it endures in a similar manner to the combustion of a congreve, being very fierce, and of short existence. If extinguished suddenly, by throwing cold water upon it, of course there is a hiss and a sputter; but, if allowed to wear itself out—an admirable plan in all

first attachments—it declines gradually and silently as a fumigating pastille.

If a bachelor escapes being booked until he is five or six years after age, the chances are that he will remain single some time longer. He looks upon marriage with a more serious regard, and begins to think the same face *might* tire, however lovely its aspect, if he had nothing else to gaze at “from morn till dewy eve.” He sees friends of his own age, who have married for love, or were too impatient to wait for an income, beginning to grumble at each other, and their increasing expenditure. This rather frightens him, and induces him to think it is best to be free, after all.

There is nothing in the world so agreeable as flirting, and we look upon a downright earnest flirt as a creation of the first order. There is no trap laid here—no calculation in her few hours’ attachment,—it is all the warm-hearted emanation of an affectionate disposition. She does not wonder what your income is, or whether you have any expectations *in futuro*, but prefers you, for the evening, to the best match of the season. And, provided you meet her on her own ground, and with her own weapons, and there are no unpleasant friends to ask your “intentions” if you carry your philandering too far, you may enumerate in your life-time some of the brightest moments allotted to man; only dimmed, to be sure, by the wound your vanity experiences when she cuts you in her caprice, and transfers her love to another quarter.

Generally speaking, a *célibataire* is pretty safe when talking nonsense to a professed flirt; but if he has not a matrimonial disposition, and persists in laughing at love, he should beware of boarding-houses as he would of hydrophobia, and more especially at the watering-places; for they are a regular system of bachelor traps, always set

and baited with every kind of feminine variety;—aged seventy-fours, almost laid up in dock, who occasionally act as guard-ships to the establishment; fast-sailing privateers, who sometimes hoist the black flag, under the garb of widows; and tight-built yachts, with a good figurehead and clean run, in the shape of *demoiselles d marier*, forming in their *ensemble* an attractive Maelstrom, which it requires some pilotage to escape. These are all dangerous craft to fall in with, especially the last; for if people choose to leave the comfort of their homes for the *ennui* of a sea-side town, it is evident that every plan must be resorted to for killing the time as quickly as possible, which they have so long anticipated. The young people get thrown together; they gamble for crockery inkstands, *bouquets de la Reine*, and German silver butter-knives, at the library sweepstakes, receiving a certain half-crown's worth of value for the six shillings which fill the raffle; they contemplate the ocean, and its adopted children, the bathers, on the sands; they walk together on the pier to see the steamers arrive and depart, or join parties of pleasure to every place not worth seeing in the neighbourhood; and, finally, whilst strolling together one fine evening upon the cliffs, they are overcome by the influence of the moon, from time immemorial the patroness of lunatics, and propose. This is no rare history: we should like to call the attention of the Statistical Society to a return of the number of matches which have sprung from the casual intimacy of a sea-side boarding-house.

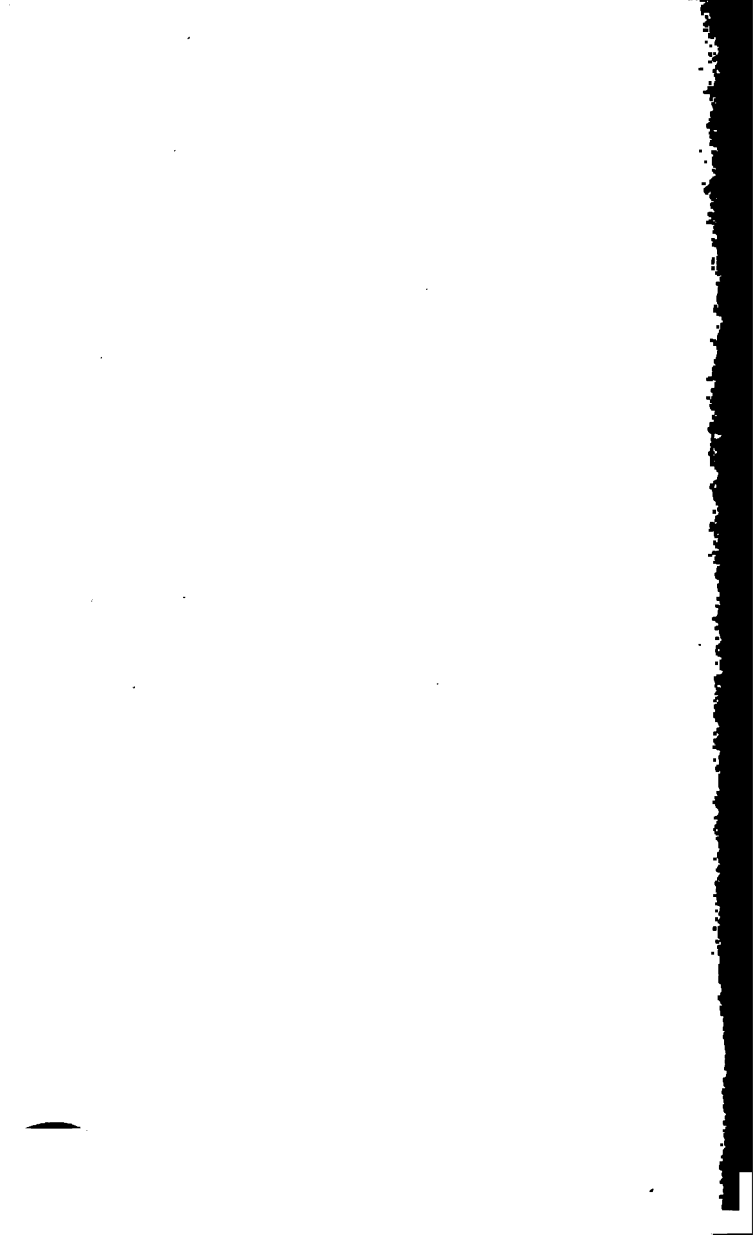
Possibly a leading reason which inclines us to the determination of dying an old bachelor is, that there is little doubt of marriage gradually becoming an acknowledged mercantile transaction. We think, before long, the state of the hymeneal markets will be chronicled in the newspapers, in common with the other commercial affairs of

the day, which our "nation of shopkeepers" feel such delight in perusing. The chief marts will be the ball-rooms and public resorts of the metropolis, together with the fashionable provincial towns. We shall read that at the Horticultural Fête the demand for young ladies was brisk, and that dark eyes and chesnut hair went off at good prices; that at Ascot Races little business was transacted, but that, upon adjourning to Lady F——'s *soirée* (a sort of Tortoni's whereat to carry on business after the great Bourse had closed), the exchange of hearts rose higher than it had been all day. Assurance societies will be established against the chance of dying a spinster, with the most approved match-making *chaperons* for directors, and a capital of twenty-thousand bachelors; and possibly a price-current will be published of most of the young men about town.

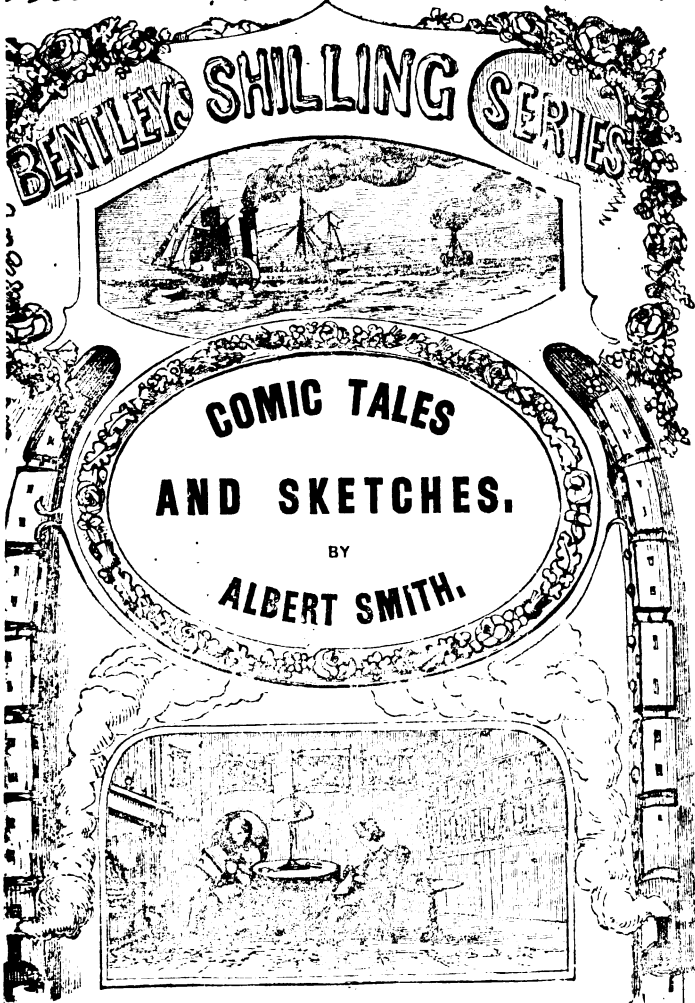
But we think we have said enough. We could produce more arguments in favour of our opinions, but we are fearful of irritating the young ladies, and upon our next entrance into society encountering the same fate from their hands which Orpheus met with from the Thracian women. One word more, and we have finished. We are never too old to repent, and possibly we might some day see reasons to change our sentiments; for we should not like to be thought obstinately self-opinionated. And if there is any pretty Beatrice who might like to try the experiment of converting us to matrimony, we are not above conviction, and we give her leave to make the attempt.

THE END.

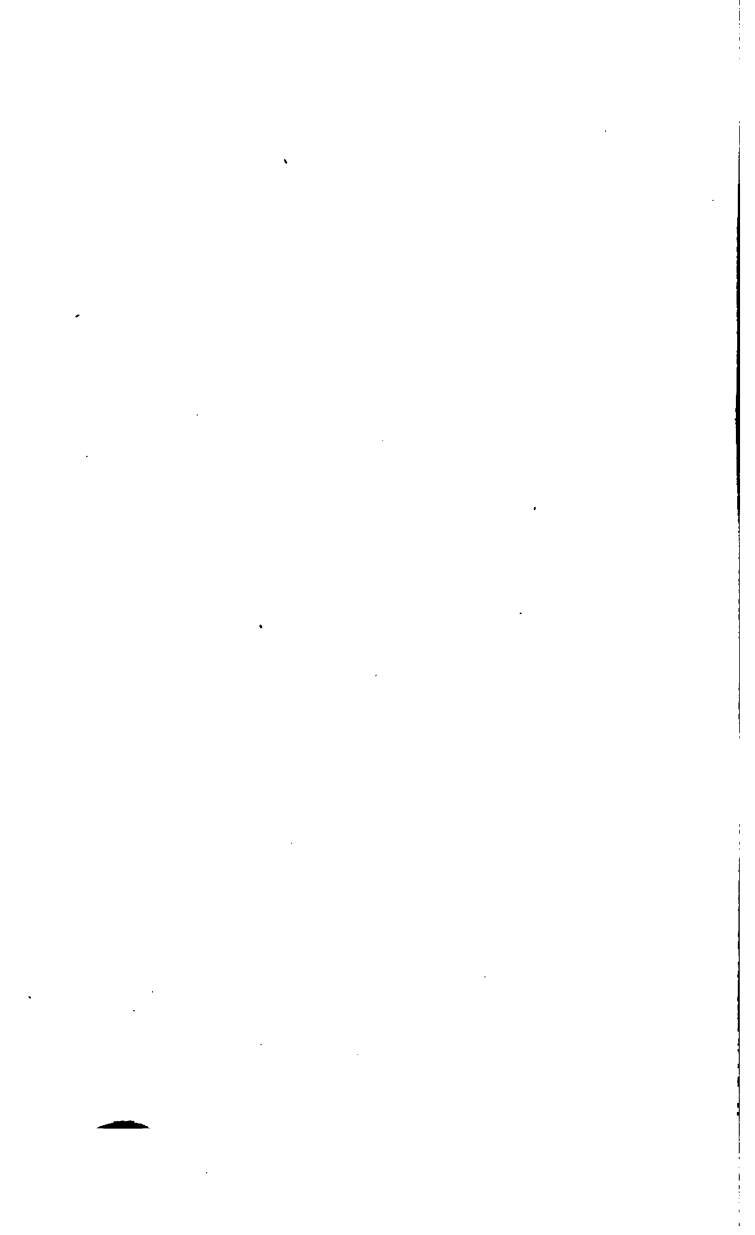




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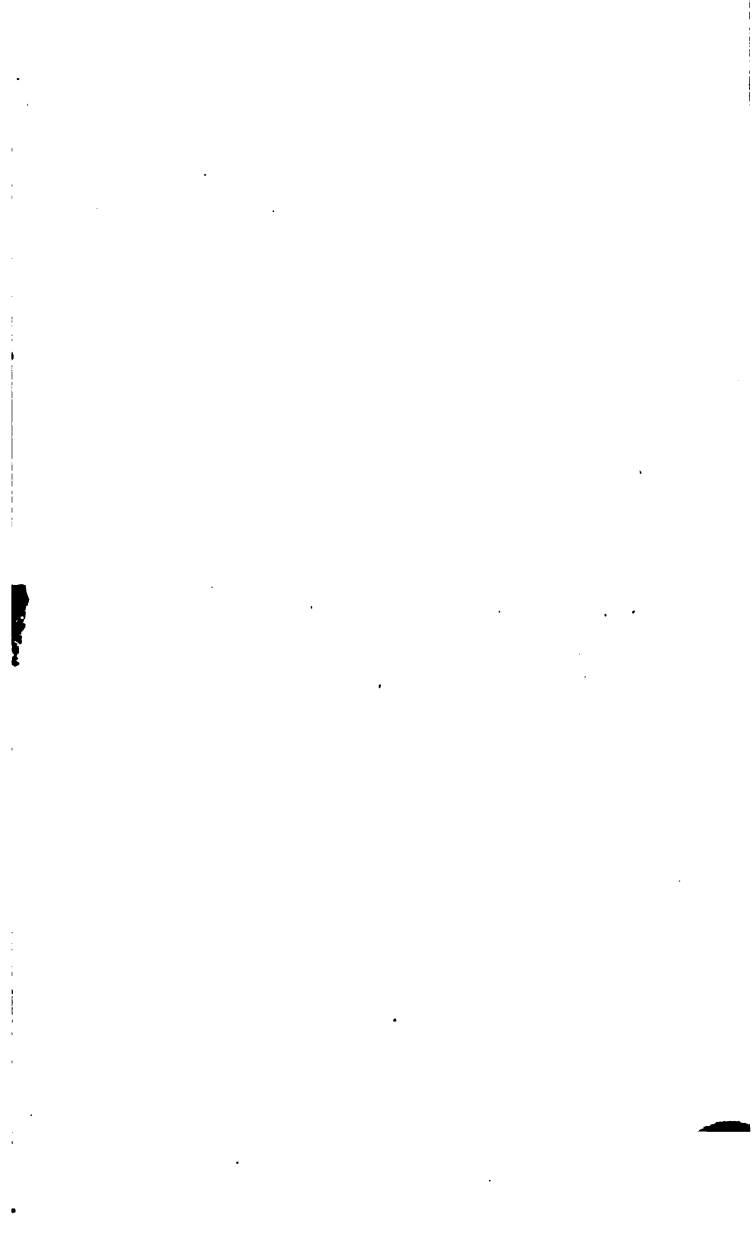
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